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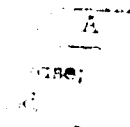
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Second Annual Staunton Hill Conference on China's People's Liberation Army (PLA)

Conference Proceedings

6-8 September 1991

Staunton Hill, Virginia



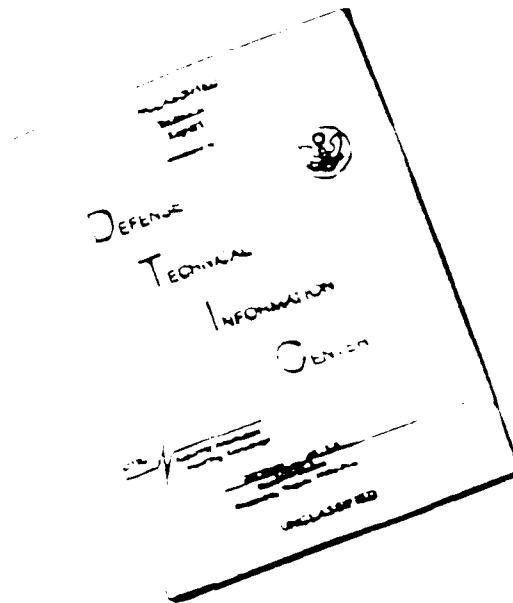
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Introduction

In 1990, the year following the People's Liberation Army (PLA) intervention in Tiananmen Square, David Bruce, son of the former ambassador to the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Colonel C. Dennison Lane, former US Army Liaison Officer to Hong Kong, organized a conference dedicated to an assessment of the PLA and its role in contemporary China. The Defense Intelligence Agency supported this activity as a means of bringing together leading academics and members of the intelligence and policy communities familiar with Chinese military issues. This special mix of perspectives is especially important at a time when both China as a nation and the PLA as an institution are going through a prolonged period of development and change.

The Second Annual Staunton Hill Conference on China's PLA was held 6-8 September 1991. The timing of the 1991 conference, less than three weeks after the dramatic failed coup in the Soviet Union, is critical for China watchers. The Conference provided an exceptionally rich opportunity to examine and assess the current state of the PLA and discuss PLA intentions in the event of another crisis. Initial Chinese responses to American military success in the Persian Gulf provided the basis for examination of the issues of conventional capabilities, doctrine development, and integration of military strategy with foreign policy. The response of Chinese military leaders to these lessons as related to the outside world further affects input into key political issues to be addressed in the pending leadership succession.

The scope the conference was defined by its theme: PLA in the context of the changing international environment. First day presentations examined external and internal demands on China's leadership, key trends in Chinese foreign and domestic policy, and impact on the PLA. The second day examined specific critical military issues: implications of recent changes in Chinese military

doctrine and strategy; PLA response to DESERT STORM; and implications of recent changes in PLA leadership. The closing session presented societal and institutional overviews of the PLA. In addition, the conference provided opportunities for views of the PLA from the regional perspectives of former Counsels General in Guangzhou and Shenyang.

The Program

Keynote speakers underscored the importance of understanding the role of the PLA in Chinese society and politics. Lieutenant General Samuel Wilson, USA (Retired), former Director, Defense Intelligence Agency and veteran of the World War II China-Burma-India theater, stressed the need to answer the question of what the PLA will do in the next crisis. He reminded participants of the common fallacy of judging the PLA and its effectiveness in Western terms of professionalism.

Doug Paal of the National Security Council stated that the NSC takes the PLA very seriously despite the current suspension of military relations with China. He acknowledged that the most important decision-making body in China today is the Central Military Commission (CMC) and that the US policy community needs to know more about Chinese military factions and elements and what may come to the fore especially in the event of a succession crisis.

Dr. Ron Montaperto, speaking for the Intelligence Community, reminded civilian academics that defense intelligence by its nature focuses on aspects of Chinese policy that bear on US interests, in particular military interests. While the relationship between the intelligence and academic communities due to their respective natures cannot be too close, academics provide valuable perspectives, insights, and theoretical constructs necessary for the enhancement of intelligence community analysis. This is especially true with regard to assessing the state of the PLA today as a key organization in flux.

In the first session, Edward Friedman set forth a hypotheses that established the general tone of the conference: through the economic transformation proceeding from the south, China is undergoing a fundamental change in values through which the concept of China as a nation is increasingly defined in terms of the more open and market-oriented society in the south rather than a traditionally conservative, agrarian society of the north. The northern, Leninist leadership is increasingly isolated from the general population.

This development has potentially profound implications for the PLA because, while the leadership is northern, significant elements within the PLA, particularly the technically oriented and the younger, more professionally oriented who came to the fore during the 1980s, have rejected the implications of the leadership's foreign policy. Lin Chongpin, in his assessment of recent trends toward internal instability and PLA activities to counter these trends and retain internal control, proposed that the PLA is coming under increasing pressures and may not hold together as an institution.

In the second session, Paul Godwin underscored the significance of the PLA's recent shift from People's War doctrine to the concept of Local Wars by arguing that the new doctrine enhanced control of the PLA by the center (represented by the CMC) and General Staff Department (GSD). Execution of Local War doctrine requires well-educated, trained, technically-oriented military personnel. More importantly, the command and control structure for Local Wars requires strong direction from the center where the General Staff is integrated into the foreign policy decision making process.

Harlan Jencks reviewed the Chinese discussion about DESERT STORM, concluding that despite early Chinese rhetoric to the contrary, DESERT STORM had a definite impact on the PLA as evidenced by recent defense budget increases. He also felt that DESERT STORM strengthened the hand of PLA professionals. Michael Swaine, in assessing the impact of the 1990 changes in Military Region and Group Army (GA) commanders, presented a five part analytical model that reflected increased disunity within the PLA.

In the final session, Henri Eyraud and Ellis Joffe presented overviews of the PLA as an institution. Eyraud stressed the bureaucratic tradition of China in reminding the conference that PLA officers

essentially were bureaucrats and should be expected to function as such, whether in crisis or in response to development situations that might require innovation. Joffe stressed the institutional integrity of the PLA and argued that analysts who look to the PLA to take the lead in political issues are asking too much. The average PLA officer will do what he is told because it is his duty as a soldier.

In their presentation of regional views of the PLA, former American Consulate Generals Mark Pratt and Gene Dorris reflected traditional differences between north and south. Pratt, who served in Guangzhou, portrayed a politically active PLA involved in a wide variety of economic enterprises. Dorris, who served in Manchuria, or the Northeast, described a picture of the PLA in the Shenyang Military Region (MR) that was a more conventional, garrison-bound PLA interacting little with local government/party leaders.

Findings: Key issues

1. Vision of Chinese nationalism. The emerging split between the economically oriented, outward looking south and the politically oriented, inward looking North, particularly as defined by the current Leninist leadership, has created significantly different visions of China's value as a nation.

The current official vision of China's role in the twenty-first century, as political and military leader and balancer in Asia to Japan's economic influence, has been rejected by significant elements of the PLA, particularly the younger, more technically oriented officers who increasingly believe that the current leadership is out of touch with reality. This generation's vision of Chinese nationalism is as an economically strong, relatively open society participating actively in the international order. This attitude forms a major generational difference between those over and under 50 years old.

In a crisis, this difference could be a major factor for disunity within the PLA. At issue is how deeply this difference in vision will affect the PLA if such a crisis should arise. There was general consensus that the younger generation's internationally oriented sense of nationalism would eventually replace the regional leadership vision of the older generation. If a crisis occurs before this vision takes sufficient hold, however, it could be a significant source of disunity among the officer corps if the

PLA is called to act as political arbiter in a succession crisis.

2. PLA lessons from recent major events. *Tiananmen.* Participants generally agreed that within the PLA there were three different attitudes toward the lessons of Tiananmen. One PLA group believes that the army should not have been used. Another harbors support for the demonstrators and their aims, while a third believes that although force was necessary to resolve the crisis, the PLA was mishandled by the leadership.

DESERT STORM. While the PLA, in particular those elements responsible for doctrine development, could not help but be impressed by the US deployment of sophisticated weapons systems in DESERT STORM, it is difficult to assess how China could react in an immediate, concrete fashion to meet the perceived new challenges represented by the US success. In particular, the transformation of defense industry and technology into operational capabilities is a long, arduous process for which the Chinese to date have shown only limited success.

On the other hand, a popular response, both in official PLA publications and held by many senior commanders, is that Iraq's defeat is irrelevant for China. The Iraq army was not in a position to deploy People's War; it did not fight on its own territory; its soldiers were not adequately indoctrinated; and the army relied on static defenses. The degree to which DESERT STORM affects the PLA will be seen in decisions regarding the defense budget and emphasis on research and development. The professionally and technologically oriented elements of the PLA will push to enhance Local War capabilities, while the more traditional commanders and politically oriented officers will stress People's War values.

3. PLA Doctrine. *People's War Under Modern Conditions vs. Local War.* Despite PLA public commitment to the doctrine of Local War and apparent trends in training and education, People's War concepts retain a strong hold on PLA mentality. Conferees accepted the distinctions between the effects of the two doctrines: People's War requires large forces, draws upon popular support, and requires significant and consistent political indoctrination, whereas Local War requires smaller, more mobile, technically oriented forces that rely

less on popular support than professional competence.

These differences are significant, especially in light of the growing disparities between north and south. In the northern Shenyang MR, for example, the group armies remain oriented on the Soviet threat (or new threat, however it may be defined by the Chinese leadership) and rely principally on People's War concepts of the strategic defense. As a result, these northern armies are more populist and conservative than most of the PLA.

During conference discussions, it was noted that the Shenyang MR units deployed for Tiananmen came from these northern group armies. Conservative attitudes among strong northern units probably act as a source of support for the current Leninist regime. In addition, such attitudes also counter arguments that the PLA, on the whole, is a unified institution in its move toward modernization represented by developments in Local War Doctrine. Finally, it was noted that Chinese military doctrine is evolving at a pace significantly behind the pace of world political and technological change.

4. Institutional Differences. The PLA is recognized as a collection of significantly different communities. While this observation is true for all military services (the US military, for instance, has a staggering amount of different communities, ranging from the Navy submarine community to the Air Force space community and the Army special forces community), what is significant for the PLA are the possible different responses by each community to a potential political crisis.

Principal communities identified as having different orientations to key issues, such as the vision of Chinese nationalism and political succession, were the technical communities (which include research and development and technical production), some strategic think tanks, the Group Armies in the field and the leadership of the General Staff. Regional differences among the MR's also were considered. Within the technical communities, there are two significant approaches to military modernization. The COSTIND/Polytechnologies group see the problem of military modernization as a simple matter of exerting a straight line effort to catch up with the West. Outside this group, other leaders such as former Air Force commander Wang

Hai and Defense Minister Zhang Aiping accept openness to the west as the price for modernization.

5. Generational Differences. Conferees generally agreed that within the PLA, there is an identifiable difference between officers and commanders over and under 50. As a rule, younger officers emphasize professional competence over political unity. The outcome of political succession ultimately will revolve around opposing visions of Chinese nationalism. Although differences within the PLA will contribute to this crisis, its resolution is an issue ultimately beyond the PLA itself. Nevertheless, the logic of the generational distinction follows closely the thesis of north-south differences.

As Chinese foreign policy increasingly is drawn from a vision of China with clearly identifiable regional interests, rather than an ideologically determined universalist view that prepares the populace for a general defense against all foreign influences, China's military requirements will be defined by limited regional political objectives which in turn require modern weapons and command, control, and communication (C³) systems manned by professional soldiers. As a rule, younger officers accept this view, which is consistent with the general political view now evolving in the south. It was noted during discussions that prior to Tiananmen, officer salons within various communities had begun to form for the purpose of discussing issues of military doctrine and weapons development. These salons have disappeared since Tiananmen in the wake of political control reimposed by the General Political Department (GPD).

6. PLA Response to Taiwan. In assessing potential implications of the Soviet coup, several conferees proposed that Taiwan now had significant new opportunities to expand its foreign influence, principally through economic assistance to former Soviet republics. The PRC might eventually be forced to respond, especially if the new Taiwan influence threatened either to undermine Chinese Communist Party (CCP) legitimacy or lead to Taiwan independence.

PLA capabilities remain limited, and while a military buildup in the Nanjing MR could create panic in the Taiwan stock market and cause economic hardships, the PLA remains incapable of

mounting a successful invasion on short notice. Requirements for military actions are such that evidence of a build up would be detected early on and would invoke international responses, particularly from the United States, which is bound by the terms of the Taiwan Relations Act to provide for the defense of Taiwan. In addition, Taiwan is a critical factor in Deng Xiaoping's relationship with the United States which he cannot jeopardize. On the other hand, if the regime on Taiwan succeeds in gaining political influence on the mainland or in becoming independent, the current CCP regime probably could not survive. Discussion was left open on how the PLA would respond to orders to move against Taiwan.

7. PLA relations with the People's Armed Police (PAP). Ties between the PLA and PAP have been critical since Tiananmen, when the PAP failed and the PLA was called in to clear the square. The central question is that of command and control relations at the top, specifically within the CMC, where there appears to be a blurring of staff control. The PAP has been strengthened in the Beijing Capital region since Tiananmen, and its budget has been enhanced. It was noted, however, that the PAP budget may be set by the Ministry of State Security (MSS), not the PLA. While the formation of the PAP in 1985 ostensibly freed the PLA to concentrate on defending against external threats, Tiananmen forced the PLA to refocus on its internal security mission. It was noted, however, that despite its apparent failure in Tiananmen, no PAP unit commanders were replaced, with the exception of the national level leadership group of Zhou Zushu (CDR), his Political Commissar, Wang Feng, and their principal deputies.

Of specific concern to the analytical communities charged with predicting what the military will do in a crisis, the issue of PLA/PAP coordination and their relationship with the MSS in the Beijing Capital region are probably the most critical. Several conferees cited the precedents of both the recent Soviet coup and the perhaps more relevant move in 1976 by the Chinese 8341 security unit to seize the Gang of Four and preserve Deng Xiaoping's power position within the CCP Politburo.

8. Command Relations. PLA/PAP relations are one element of the larger issue of overall PLA

command and control. Who can order the basic maneuver unit, the Group Army, to move in the event of a crisis, as they did in Tiananmen? Specifically, in the chain from the CMC through the MR commander to the Group Army Commander, what is the role of the MR commander, and what is his strength relative to the center?

Conferees were split on this issue. One group agreed that the MR commander not only does not have authority to move GA's, but functions only as a communications link between the CMC and GA's. Others argued that the MR commanders retain extensive control, and the GA's cannot move without their permission. Another variation was that the MR commander cannot order a GA to move but can prevent it from moving. Discussion inevitably revolved around the May 1989 Wu Han incident in which Deng reportedly went to this central city to directly enlist the support of MR commanders for the crackdown at Tiananmen. While there is no agreement that the meeting ever took place, there is consensus that the center did and must still consult the regions. One argument for centralized control is that there is no precedent when the PLA, whether during the Peng Dehuai days, the Cultural Revolution, or Tiananmen, has ever failed to obey the center. The rejoinder to this argument, however, was that events in China today are unprecedented, and analysts in particular should not be bound by precedent.

9. US Military Relations with China. The conference provided the opportunity to discuss at some length both the possibility and advisability of restoring, in some fashion, formal military relations with the PLA. The argument for restoration was based on the essential fact that relations between major states inescapably include a military dimension. Despite the obvious American political objections to military relations with China since Tiananmen, a certain level of military to military dialogue would serve US interests in China. In the past, the PLA leadership was receptive to policy initiatives and advice from mid-to-high level

Department of Defense officials who were able to talk frankly with PLA leaders to ensure that they fully understood the thrust of US policy. This dimension is now missing in the relationship.

Conclusions

In the early 1980s, the long range view was that a strong, modern China was a force for stability. This went beyond the immediate objective of playing the "China card" to balance the Soviet Union in recognizing China's potential as a major world actor. A strategic dialogue was begun to discover mutual interests.

Since Tiananmen, US administration policy has stressed the importance of maintaining a relationship with China. Until Tiananmen, the military relationship had been part of the larger. Afterwards, DoD actions to limit the relationship have gone beyond measures reported in the press. With some exceptions, "munitions list" deliveries were stopped; high-level visits were stopped (defined as Assistant Secretary and above, actually a very few people in DoD); and all working-level visits were stopped. All contact with the PLA (except for minimal attaché contact), was cut off. Liberalization of dual-use technology export to China was stopped as were all foreign military sales contracts and commercial military sales. It was suggested that the psychological impact of these actions on US-China relations may be as bad as that of the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s.

It appears that the PLA is willing to restore "friendly ties." Nevertheless, the form of any future military relationship will be different from that of the 1980s. Significantly, there were no major objections among conference participants to the basic argument for some form of military relationship. A representative from the Congressional Research Service did, however, elaborate the list of objections currently prevalent on the Hill: human rights, Chinese proliferation policies, and the appearance of US approval of the current leadership and its policies.

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Remarks and Discussion

Opening Remarks and Introduction

LTG Sam Wilson, USA (Ret). We often approach the PLA from the false premise that they are not professional and often must be reminded, as we are at this conference, that in China, the concept of protracted war remains, and the Chinese emphasize much more heavily than do westerners political objectives rather than the destruction of the enemy. The ideal of Sun Tzu remains: it is better to prevail without war; war seldom serves the general good of society, and the state must seek to serve the general good. At the same time, the PLA of the 1979 invasion of Vietnam, despite terrible technical inadequacies and serious manpower losses, did achieve the objective of destroying two provincial capitals and reminding the Vietnamese, and indirectly the rest of the world, that it could and would pay high military prices for political objectives.

The objectives of the conference are really twofold: to further an understanding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army as it develops along with the country, and to determine what the PLA will do in the next crisis, should it come.

Policy Perspective

Doug Paal. The NSC and US policy community take the PLA seriously, even though military relations between the US and PRC are suspended. Currently, US policy is hostage to the human rights situation in China and the proliferation issues. The contracts to sell missiles which exceed the limits of the MTCR and Chinese involvement in the Algerian nuclear power program reflect risky behavior of the Chinese leadership. People are looking closer at China, but China is not about to relax its human rights policies. People are questioning if China accepts international standards of behavior regarding proliferation. There has been some progress on proliferation issues, but China has only

paid lip service to the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Relations between the US and China are bleak and getting bleaker.

The CMC is the most important body in China. We need to know more about Chinese military factions and what elements of the PLA may come to the fore.

Intelligence Perspective

Ron Montaperto. By its very nature, defense intelligence focuses on those aspects of Chinese policy that bear on US interests, in particular, US military interests. The relationship between intelligence and academia should not be too close, but it is possible and, as reflected by this conference, desirable to have more interaction, both formally and informally.

Internal and External Factors

China's Perception of the World and Its Role in International Relations

Edward Friedman. The Chinese regime is Leninist; its number one concern is the maintenance and consolidation of power. The priority PLA mission is to facilitate the consolidation of power and patriotism and is the regime's most powerful prop. While the emphasis on economic development has not yet replaced the emphasis on politics, nevertheless, a fundamental shift in Chinese values is taking place in which economic values are replacing political values as the basis for a new sense of Chinese nationalism. This shift has potentially profound implications for the PLA.

There is a growing perception in the PLA that the people in power do not serve China's real interests. The concept of Chinese nationalism is changing as illustrated by the difference in presentation of concepts of "north" and "south." Previously, "north" represented good, and "south" was bad. Today, things "southern" are good, while "northern" is isolated and discredited. The Foreign Policy Small

Group of the Party Central Committee assumes that the 21st century will be the "Asian Century." In outlining its 21st century policy, the group has outlined how China will take advantage of the 21st century and it has done so in a manner that serves directly to consolidate the position of the Li Peng group.

The 21st century policy defines two principal security missions: enfolding Taiwan and creating policies to exploit Japan's natural economic lead in East Asia. The current regime simply does not understand Taiwan; its continual security preoccupation with Taiwan is in obvious conflict with the necessity to exploit openness and trade with Taiwan. The younger PLA generation regards this policy's attitude towards Japan as fantasy and believes it is better for China to be more open in working with and playing off its economic competition. The PLA increasingly perceives the fact that the 21st century policy serves the narrow interest of Li Peng and not the country as a whole.

The PLA will act to prevent chaos, but the old guard does not deserve PLA loyalty. No one in the PLA at present will turn against the current leadership, but once Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun are gone, no one has the legitimacy of credibility to replace them. In conclusion, Deng is the last emperor, and unfortunately, the old guard has set the PLA off against its own tradition.

Comments

Edward Friedman: Remember that the French, during the first half of the 19th century, felt they had a similar flaw in their political culture.

Michael Swaine: Friedman's view of the PLA is true for the generation under 50. The military leaders between 50 and 70 are not so open, and they constitute a "lost" generation.

Ellis Joffe: It cannot be taken for granted that the PLA will intervene. Deng and Yang Shangkun are the only ones who may move the PLA to action analogies between the USSR, East Europe, and China cannot be drawn.

Internal Changes in China and Relevance of the PLA

Lin Chongpin. The PLA activities to stabilize the country include political (military training for college and high school students, and the Lei Feng campaign), economic (PLA enterprises and civilian

production in military factories), social (disaster relief, reforestation), and security (Asian Games security, alert during Soviet coup).

Trends for destabilization in the PLA include: 1) discontent; 2) lack of discipline; 3) regionalism; 4) the succession to Deng; and 5) reaction to the Soviet coup. Even Deng Xiaoping has publicly noted the potential factional split in the military forces. Two sources had reported 30 to 35 cases which arrest 300 to 400 PLA personnel for "coup plotting."

With regard to problems of corruption within the PLA and the issue of family and *guanxi* ties within the military, contacts among relatives of the first generation of military leaders takes place above division level. Beneath division, there are few contacts. In addition, regionalism remains a key problem, and there is a significant overlap of economic and military regions. The impact of regionalism is evident in passive defiance by local leaders, local protectionism (most often in the form of tariffs) and inter provincial cooperation (most often at the expense of the center).

The behavior of the PLA is uncertain in the next crisis.

Comments

John Frankenstein: As an economist, I disagree that PLA involvement in running commercial enterprises is a factor for stability. Because PLA-run enterprises are separate from the civilian economy, it can be as much a factor for divisiveness as for stability. In Shenzhen, for example, the corruption of local PLA units in exploiting special zone privileges was a corrosive influence.

Moderator: Had the PLA not gotten involved in civilian production, it would be poorer and more angry. Is corruption more of a problem in the PLA than in the rest of Chinese society?

June Dreyer: The PLA has potential for an even greater degree of corruption. There are two different armies in the PLA, one in the field and the other in production. The PLA may be more "captured" by the local environment when in production, resulting in more of a tendency toward regionalism. Commanders have to make some accommodation to the local area.

Michael Swaine: Local military and party elites do not get along. Their interests are not congruent, and they compete with each other. Demobilization of large numbers of the PLA irritates locals.

Arthur Waldron: Military dictators are not common to China. Historically, leaders usually change from military to civilian. The military is a stepping stone to positions of civilian authority.

Ellis Joffe: With regard to the question of regionalism, it is important to note a salient point of military logic. People's War, because it relies on popular support along regional borders for strategic defense, is conducive to regionalism. Local wars, on the other hand, call for central control.

Ron Montaperto: The limited objectives of Local War lead to centralized control because they support centrally directed foreign policy.

Moderator: The PLA role in maintaining stability is obvious and it should be noted that the leadership changes after Tiananmen stopped before getting to the very top of the PLA. The PRC leadership does not have the confidence to replace the top PLA leaders.

Edward Friedman: A new regionalism is growing and it is defined by the types of corruption evident throughout society. There are two kinds of corruption: the first caused by a system that does not work, resulting in a "corruption" that gets things done (this type is not necessarily bad); and a second caused by greed that does not make the system better. The former type of corruption is driving the economy in the south, the latter limits development opportunities in the north.

Military Issues

PLA Strategy and Doctrine

Paul Godwin. There actually are three different armies in the PLA: the PLA involved in local politics, the entrepreneurial PLA, and the PLA directly involved in the development and actual implementation of doctrine and strategy. This presentation focuses on the last PLA, particularly on its professional military scholars who for the past decade have contributed to the formation of the current PLA doctrine and force structure.

In 1985, the CMC issued new strategic guidance that nuclear war with the USSR is no longer inevitable and that the PLA should focus on more pressing issues of limited local wars and unexpected events. Limited wars have limited political objectives, limited geographic scope, and high intensity. It is not necessary to destroy the enemy's capability to make war, but rather to destroy his will

to fight. The PLA defined its need to fight and win the "First Battle," in the same manner as in the US Army FM 100-5. The PLA needed to improve its combined and joint war fighting capabilities. Mao's "Three Stages of War" no longer applied.

The PLA had to be ready to fight immediately, but the overall technical level of the PLA as a whole did not allow it to fight limited wars effectively. Therefore, special "Fist" units were equipped and trained to fight immediately. In addition the Military Region Commander has become the theater commander, equivalent to the US Unified Command Commander-in-Chief or CINC. Conduct of the immediate war in the theater is in the hands of the MR Commander.

From 1985 to 1989, officers began to feel professional. They formed a new image of themselves because of new ranks, uniforms, and education. Indeed, within the PLA there is a new military ethic tied directly to the national institution of the PLA.

At the colonel and brigadier levels and below, the old Field Army ties are no longer relevant. However, the involvement in Tiananmen sent a profound shock through the young officers. Yang Baibing's attempt to bring the PLA back into internal security affairs worries these officers.

In sum, the 1984 Military Service Law, the reduction in force and change in strategy created a new PLA. DESERT STORM has had a significant impact on this new PLA because younger officers see the need for that type of capability in order to conduct high intensity wars of limited objectives and duration.

PLA Evaluation of DESERT STORM

Harlan Jencks. The PLA reaction to DESERT STORM reflects internal Chinese politics. After 1985 there was a complete break with People's War Under Modern Conditions in favor of the Limited War concept.

The official Chinese position during DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM was support of the UN. The Chinese, however, unofficially considered Iraq to be a Third World member supplied with Chinese arms. Implicit in the Chinese view was the assumption that Iraq would employ People's War Under Modern Conditions.

Iraq had the "human factor," which was its secret weapon. It would protract the war and make the US

bleed, exposing its vulnerability to domestic popular pressure. Chinese official statements stressed this US vulnerability to high casualties. He Xin stated on 22 January 1991 that Iraq would win because of People's War Under Modern Conditions. But should the US win, then the US in its hubris would threaten China. Early 1991 saw an upsurge in articles that stressed training, education and the importance of military exercises.

A series of CMC meetings after January looked at the implications of the war (they had overestimated Iraq) and called for the need to evaluate the lessons of the war. (US use of Night Vision Devices, for example, allowed them to "Own the night;" previously a Chinese specialty.)

Yang Shangkun called for the PLA to obtain sophisticated military equipment. A February meeting of the CMC called for an increase in the PLA budget, reduction in manpower (possibly 500,000 personnel), and a reversal of civilian and military priorities in R&D (thus raising military modernization up from number four in the Four Modernizations to number one or two).

In obvious response to a high level internal decision, probably by the CMC, a tight lid was placed on all war news after 21 January.

The results of the Chinese reactions and deliberations reinforced key trends. People's War Under Modern Conditions was completely discredited; Limited War strategy was strengthened (with chance of invasion by the USSR now down to zero, limited war on a border is more likely). The need to modernize for a regional war was reinforced, along with recognition of the US as the model for PLA modernization.

There is still debate about the size of the military budget. After DESERT STORM, Yang Shangkun, Yang Baibing, and *People's Daily* called for modernization, but with the insistence that modernization can come with Chinese "essence" or characteristics. A minority still calls for People's War and names the US as a military threat.

An important issue in this debate is the proposed cut in PLA personnel. (Hardliners say no, modernizers say yes.) A resulting internal problem will be what to do with the demobilized soldiers. Consequently, key indicators to watch for in the debates over the PLA and its future political role are calls for a return to People's War and the size of the PLA.

The Role of the Chinese Military in the Succession Struggle

Michael Swaine. The PLA role will be determined by five analytical elements: 1) the role of the elders in shaping the pattern of PLA involvement in politics; 2) personal relations between formal military and party leaders; 3) institutional relations between the party and the military and within the military apparatus; 4) the beliefs and attitudes of both party and military leaders toward PLA involvement in leadership strife; and, 5) regional military power.

The elders have been highly influential in shaping PLA involvement in politics since 1949, serving as the 'glue' that ensured relatively unified PLA behavior during periods of social unrest and elite contention. Just as Mao was crucial during the Cultural Revolution, Deng played a similar role at Tiananmen.

For the future, there is no leader who can play such a role, and there is little apparent contact between elder PLA elite and the current formal civilian leadership. Hence, in order to avoid a destabilizing pattern of PLA involvement in the future, the next generation of 'weaker' party leaders will need to either: a) reach some type of consensus on a successor leadership (both among themselves and with the PLA leadership); or b) assure that formal, as opposed to personalized, lines of authority are observed. While Yang Shangkun definitely plays a central political military role, his record is mixed. He has close ties to Deng and has supported military reform but is associated closely with Tiananmen and Yang Baibing. Overall, the order in which the leaders die may be very important in shaping the issues, political positions, and personal relationships of China's successor generation, including their links to PLA members. Yet, regardless of the precise order of death, the personal prestige of whichever elder remains will almost certainly be used to support some intended successor(s), to the exclusion of others. The PLA leadership will almost certainly need to provide clear support to such favored successor(s) in order to avoid severe leadership problems, most likely involving the military.

Among the three leading members of the current unstable formal elite, Li Peng, Jiang Zemin, and Yang Shangkun, only Yang has credibility with the PLA, despite Jiang's formal title as Chairman of the Central Military Commission. Most importantly,

Yang appears to have control over key Beijing area units. On the other hand, Yang's association with Yang Baibing's political control program that runs counter to pre-Tiananmen professionalism trends is of clear concern to younger professionals and military S&T groups such as the Zhang Aiping group. Zhang, for example, has refused to appear in public until things change.

Party and Army institutional relationships are the areas we know least about. No one really knows the composition, organization, and function of the CMC. Command and Control (C2) appears to be highly centralized and no units can move without CMC and General Staff approval. Unfortunately we know little of the C2 process and this will be a critical issue in analyzing PLA crisis response. The MR commander appears not to have a direct C2 role, particularly in the absence of an external threat to the country. Moreover, the C2 relationship between professional commanders and political commissars within both the MR and GA leadership systems remains very unclear, perhaps even to the Chinese themselves.

Historically, the PLA has been drawn into elite struggles to support certain segments of the party leadership, often resulting in splits within both party and military. The military has never intervened as an institution to influence politics. Apparent instances of "unified" PLA intervention in politics (such as during the Cultural Revolution and the 1976 arrest of the Gang of Four) actually consisted of either largely decentralized and disorganized responses to widespread instability or the actions of a select few dominant military-political leaders in collaboration with their "civilian" party colleagues. Tiananmen likewise involved the use of the PLA by a certain faction of dominant party leaders to protect their interests. It has also led to significant internal frictions and informal splits within the PLA, reviving the "professionalism" versus "politicization" debate while exacerbating the level of disaffection among an entire stratum of younger, nationalistic officers.

Real changes have occurred in the MRs since the 1960s and 1970s as commanders appear to have lost the direct influence they enjoyed earlier. Frequent leadership reshuffles at the regional and provincial level and the retirement and death of older PLA leaders have served to virtually eliminate the past bases for military regionalism. It also is not clear

how much regional power can be translated into influence on succession issues. Local party army elites in many areas of China have developed contrasting and often conflicting attitudes and interests and hence no longer collaborate on many issues. Local leadership elites are increasingly distant from the center, and there appears to be little formal local PLA presence at the center.

Given the changing environment and the Chinese preoccupation with the succession crisis, research in the PLA should focus on the following priorities: The Beijing MR; the sub-MR level and Group Armies; S&T structures such as COSTIND and its relationship with the General Logistics Department (GLD).

Bottom line: The PLA will become involved but it will be divisive. Widespread national involvement is unlikely since focus will be on Beijing.

Comments

Paul Godwin: A large portion of the military budget is going to the PAP. I do not support the idea that the PAP will counterbalance the PLA. Furthermore, the PLA opposes the reimposition of an internal security role upon it. That is the job for the PAP.

Ellis Joffe: The PLA has no friction with PAP conducting the internal security role. It is a ridiculous concept that the PAP would counterbalance the PLA.

Moderator: The reason for the creation of the PAP was that internal security was a mission that the PLA did not want. The lesson from the Romanian example was the need for more options than "do nothing" or "send in the PLA." Since Tiananmen, there has been no purge in the ranks of the PAP. Even though the commander of all the PAP was replaced, the commander of the 1st Zongdui in Beijing is still in command.

Moderator: The PAP command relationship is important. Who does it report to? In war it has military police functions.

Michael Swaine: The PAP is part of the PLA: "use of the PAP" is a formalistic distinction. The PAP commander is the hard-nosed commander of the 24th GA. Yang Baibing is well connected in the PAP leadership. Large PLA units were absorbed by the PAP; it is hard to make the distinction. The CMC controls the PAP.

Moderator: The CMC created a new capability the

PLA did not have. The PAP is responsive to the CMC. Politicization of the PAP is inevitable. PAP involvement will still be divisive.

Ron Montaperto: The consensus is that the PAP does not balance the PLA. Research is required about the PAP/PLA relationship. The "method of suppression" is important.

Moderator: PAP budget is under Ministry of Public Security not Ministry of Defense.

Wendy Frieman: What is the PLA vision of the future of China?

Moderator: The future of China must be discussed (in China) within "strict political parameters."

Ed Ross: Two views of China's future are tearing China apart: 1) Policy makers, COSTIND, and Modernizers hold the traditional view of China, seeing China as a world power; 2) Another group accepts that China is changing and will evolve into a more open society and the PLA's role is to defend China and its regional interests. Wang Hai is representative of this group.

June Dreyer: Yang Shangkun and Deng see that the USSR has disintegrated, therefore China needs to do something to counterbalance the US. However, the PLA cannot counterbalance the US in the foreseeable future. Others say China needs to work on infrastructure. Liu Huaqing is on the other side of Yang.

Paul Godwin: China needs to build its S&T in the next 10 years. Much to PLA chagrin, China is a marginal international player but the issue goes beyond the PLA.

Moderator: Provincialism remains in the PLA. Local Wars concept is not necessarily accepted by all of the PLA. Northern Group Armies are not interested in local wars. Navy and Air Force support Local Wars.

Paul Godwin: PLA needs to "walk on two legs." The 1988 military exercise in Beijing, Shenyang, and Lanzhou MRs were local wars directed at the USSR.

Moderator: There is still a debate on how much emphasis should go to the north and south. Northern armies are still "old thinkers," and the principal interest of the northern armies is not Local War doctrine.

Ellis Joffe: I cannot accept that there are "two PLAs." The center is in control. What is the alternative to Local War: Maoist doctrine? No. There are some modernizers who are over 50. I see

a weaker dichotomy than the moderators.

Lin Chongpin: This is a comment on the statement that "China is on the margin and is not a major player on the world stage." Since the spring of 1990, Chinese leaders have traveled all over the world. The PRC has improved relations with countries all over the world, with the exception of the US.

Harlan Jencks: China just is not relevant.

Lin Chongpin: In absolute terms "yes," but comparatively it has improved.

Ed Ross: Doctrine changes very slowly. True, PLA doctrine is changing, but the world is changing faster than Chinese leaders can come up with new thinking, because the old leaders are still in charge. DESERT STORM taught China that they cannot catch up. They need to do something quick, or else they will forever be a Third World power. The real debate is: "Will China come up with a strategy to focus S&T efforts with future requirements?"

Paul Godwin: Remember that People's War Under Modern Conditions is very flexible, and that is why Chinese military writing is more concerned with operational doctrine.

Moderator: It was doctrinal developments outside China (US FM 100-5 and Soviet operational maneuver group (OMG)) to which the PLA responded with its new doctrine. It is important not to decouple normal doctrinal debates from larger issues. S&T development is clearly linked to the PLA's vision of China's future. Zou Jiahua, for example, has been on the leading edge of integrating S&T into a larger geostrategic vision.

Two cautionary notes should be added. The PLA is very diverse; it cannot be broken down into reformer vs. traditionalist. The Chinese can learn different lessons than foreigners from the same event. Different motivations result in different interpretations. For example, an old Military District Commander on the Mongolian border blamed Iraq's defeat on its violation of People's War principles.

Paul Godwin: All MRs are different, therefore they have different approaches to the implementation of new doctrine.

Moderator: MRs have not diminished in their command and control role. MRs, GSD, and CMC are involved in the everyday life of the ground force.

Michael Swaine: MRs cannot direct troops to control social unrest. MRs operate to "defend the country." Deputy MR commanders accompanied their MR units into Beijing during Tiananmen in

order to facilitate logistics and C2.

Moderator: But an MR Commander can prevent a unit from doing something. At the same time, within his MR, limited movement can be made by the Commander. The key question therefore appears to be, if MRs are so weak, then why did Deng have to go the MR Commanders before ordering martial law. A significant number of analysts and academics believe *the Wuhan Conference did occur*.

Whether the conference actually took place or not, Deng needed to make sure the MR commanders would obey. What was said is not known, but he was obliged to go to them to make it work. MR Commanders were getting orders they were not sure were from Deng. Were those orders legitimate? They questioned orders they received prior to meeting with Deng. Since Tiananmen, it appears that MRs are taking on more responsibility given to them from the center.

Ellis Joffe: Power of the MRs has not diminished, but I cannot accept the concept of "several PLAs."

Edward Friedman: The 1989 Tiananmen situation was unprecedented. More unprecedented situations will come. Events in the USSR reinforce the views of Taiwan: they are more confident in their future and past paths. Expect large changes in the PRC-Taiwan relationship as Taiwan flexes its economic and diplomatic muscles.

They cannot make straight line projects. The northern armies are very leftist, and therefore subject to "bad" corruption, which unlike "good" corruption does not facilitate economic growth. Finally, all of China but Beijing is developing. A succession crisis is always underway in a Leninist state, and the opposition to the center coming from the south will ultimately prevail. It is a powder keg among the civilians. Who dies first?

We need to look at nonmilitary arms of the government and leaders. The regime is focused on preserving Beijing, however, the reformers have abandoned Beijing and headed to the provinces. The real China is the China outside the control of the state ministries (all but Beijing).

Ron Montaperto: The body of colonels and lieutenant colonels in the PLA holds the central leadership in disdain.

Edward Friedman: Those colonels have redefined the "national interest." Some (in Beijing) are standing in the way of that national interest.

General Discussion

Moderator: Presentations and discussions at midpoint have produced surprising consensus on several points. Thanks to Michael Swaine, there is some acceptance of a general framework of analysis for the role of the PLA in succession. There also is some consensus on the issue of professionalism: the PLA has accepted local war doctrine which has become the basic motive for professionalism; consequently, PLA priorities are set, and they intend to become like other armies. There is no agreement, however, on the one issue of what will the PLA do in a succession crisis. Within the PLA executive leadership, there are signs of loss of confidence in the civilian leadership, and within the PLA, there is apparent dissatisfaction with where the PLA is going now.

Harlan Jencks: The current national leadership could "fumble or muddle" through for a few years.

Ellis Joffe: Dissatisfaction is limited to higher ranks who deal with the "big issues." There is a symbiosis between officers and the leadership. We must assume that most officers agree with the basic values of the leadership. The corruption issue is exaggerated.

Lin Chongpin: There are several kinds of discontent, including professional (concerning modernization) and personal (some have scores to settle).

Roger Uren: Unless there is an apocalyptic event, the PLA will be loyal.

Moderator: Since Tiananmen, the USSR has been a source for modernization of the PLA. Politicians were looking at the "healthy forces" in the USSR during the coup. After some period, the PLA will go to the Russian Republic for technology.

June Dreyer: The Russian Republic will need help from China, but China can only provide limited assistance. Taiwan can offer them money and technology.

John Frankenstein: Taiwan is in central Europe today as an economic player.

Ed Ross: The worst thing China could do would be to act hostile toward Taiwan.

Clare Hollingworth: Hong Kong will go smoothly and Taiwan will follow.

June Dreyer: Disagree.

Stanley Spector: A major demonstration in Hong Kong will test the PLA and PAP.

Wendy Frieman: Hong Kong and Taiwan are different: Hong Kong has no military and no organized vocal opposition.

Edward Friedman: The security environment is changing: we do not know what will happen in Korea or Vietnam. Greater Han chauvinism will rise, but we are not clear what that is or what will happen.

Lin Chongpin: Taiwan is linked with the threat, the Taiwan Independence Movement.

Moderator: As long as half of the PLA is on the Soviet border, it can not afford to modernize. Both the USSR and China need long term reductions. Border talks are now more complicated by the multiparty system. There is the potential for chaos on the border.

Prospect for the Future

Henri Eyraud. China faces the problem of political vs. economic stability. The ultimate argument of the CCP is, "we are needed to maintain stability, therefore strong central government is needed." That argument is very influential among some PLA officers.

In looking at the future, one should consider lines of continuity and lines of surprise or rupture. Lines of continuity in Chinese society are the importance of the bureaucracy and the problem of social stability vs. economic development. Lines of surprise include the timing and conditions of the deaths of the elders and the appearance of a new national leader (currently none is in sight).

In the PLA, lines of continuity are better equipment and smaller sized. A line of surprise would be the appearance of a prepared group in the time of crisis.

Any revolution creates a counter-revolution. Sometimes it may reverse itself. We must think in this dialectic of revolution and counter-revolution. Possible ruptures may result from differing regional economic development causing different ideologies.

In the PLA, regiments are disciplined by a lack of information.

The responsibility for Tiananmen is still not resolved. Field grade officers believe it was necessary to reestablish order, but not in that manner. Eventually a few people like Deng, Li Peng, Yang Shangkun, must be identified to relieve the

PLA of its responsibility.

The present political climate does not bode well for insurrection. However, there is widespread skepticism and loss of legitimacy of the CCP and the government. There is a gradual loss of political and economic cohesion. The succession problem can be delayed. Problems will one day be more dramatic because of differing speeds of development in China.

Ellis Joffe. The PLA is in flux. And it will be in flux. There is uncertainty of the role of the PLA in a succession crisis, but the criticality of the PLA in this crisis is not a foregone conclusion.

The state of the PLA is determined by a number of characteristics: the PLA is a single entity held together by professional ethics, hierarchy, and discipline. Chinese nationalism, the quest for great power status, and the avoidance of chaos make for unity. The CCP and PLA are distinct entities with separate institutional interests. After Tiananmen, the commissar vs. professional argument was revived. The PLA has never intervened *en masse* in politics on its own, but was brought into politics by senior leaders. During Tiananmen, the PLA was used as an arm of the CCP on orders of legitimate leaders. The PLA is not "trigger happy" for political action. Senior leaders with PLA connections have used the PLA for their own political purposes. Senior PLA leaders have intervened by relying on the PLA as their power base. Therefore, the PLA has played a central role without intervening. But this era will end with the death of the old guard. The key question is: does Yang Shangkun fit this mold? Yes, he still does. He uses his PLA connections without involving the army directly. Military modernization is the main concern of the PLA officer corps. The hardline leadership will not pin their hopes on this officer corps.

There are several possible scenarios:

1. Smooth transition based on a fear of chaos. The PLA stays out.

2. In-fighting among two factions of leadership leads to stalemate and paralysis. If Yang Shangkun is alive, the PLA will support one faction. If Yang is not alive, the PLA will support the faction which supports economic modernization. (Yang Baibing

does not have much of a chance after Yang Shangkun dies.)

3. The leadership struggle breaks into demonstrations. PAP is used to control.

4. Prolonged crisis, stalemate, demonstrations, chaos, PAP cannot cope. The PLA brought in to restore order/central control where necessary. (In this case, it is possible that the PLA would move against the central leadership even if it is legitimate).

5. Paralysis and trend toward provincial disintegration. The PLA acts to unify; PLA commanders would not side with local leaders.

Comments

Harlan Jencks: There is still a lot of inertia and deadwood in the PLA. The history of Tiananmen will be rewritten.

Ellis Joffe: In China, it is difficult not only to predict the future, but also to predict the past. The weaker the PLA, the stronger other institutions like the Ministry of State Security become.

Edward Friedman: If the center holds together, it will be only through luck. The same forces at work in the USSR and Yugoslavia are at work in China. That portion of the economy that works is not in control of the center. The party is constantly losing legitimacy. Regions are more progressive; the center is not serving Chinese national dignity. What is the PLA? All fissures that existed before the PRC (before 1949) still exist under the surface. There is no real Chinese nationalism. One can expect all things seen in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Ellis Joffe: The prophet of doom is unrealistic. I do not see the parallel between the Yugoslavia and China. You have dismissed the achievements of the CCP.

Michael Swaine: Deng has destroyed the party by separating the military from the CCP. It responds directly to him. The PLA cannot be separated from events in China; it will be cleaner than the CCP or administration. The PLA is not homogenous. The military will split when there is no Deng or Yang Shangkun. Big business economic interest in Taiwan will restrain both sides, Beijing and Taipei. Taiwan will try to avoid confrontation.

Ellis Joffe: AIP--Anything is Possible. The PLA will back away from an external crisis if there is an

internal crisis.

Ron Montaperto: The PLA is not like any other organization in China.

Regional Perspectives

A Southern Perspective of the PLA

Mark Pratt. The military in the south tried to be less visible than in Beijing. Each province, Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian, Hainan, is different. The political and military are not differentiated.

In the south, the question of whether the PLA follows the Party orders depended on who gave the orders and who received them. The CCP organization at all levels is not clear; no organization can be taken at face value. Zhao Ziyang was actually number five in the CMC, not number two. Jiang Zemin has no more power in the CMC than Zhao did; Yang Shangkun has total control. I do not believe published pecking orders.

Guanxi, of course, is most important. Loyalty is a vertical relationship--up and down. Zhao was loyal to those below him; there is a possibility that Deng might bring him back. Qiao Shi is known to have his "eye on number one" and is "beastly" with his subordinates.

The PLA will play a role in any political event. Politics and the military are inseparable. The military leadership is looking to do good for China, but the military will not want to play a primary role.

A Northern Perspective

Gene Dorris. There is always a southern position and a northern position. In the Shenyang MR, there is a desire to return to the military relationship with the US. In Shenyang, the military did nothing in 1989 until martial law was declared. The 39th, the 40th, and 64th GAs went to Beijing. In Shenyang, the 64th sent low key signals of their presence. The units returned from Beijing with red badges on their license plates. After Tiananmen, the leadership reshuffle looked like a payoff to Shenyang, but deserving personnel were promoted.

Officers stay in the same GA until they are promoted to the MR level. Soldiers in northeastern GAs were local peasants. Local units and townships often struck contracts for recruits. There was a dichotomy between the students (bourgeois) and the soldiers (peasantry). The task of professionalism in the PLA is how to upgrade a peasant army. There

are special relationships between former members of the 2nd Field Army and the center, and in the northeast, links exist between the 4th Field Army and Guangdong and the 3rd Field Army and Nanjing. Li Desheng is constantly raised as an important figure, but not a superpower figure as

often noted elsewhere.

The PLA's role in society has changed since the early 1970s. Now there are very few ties between the government and the military. Elements of the PLA in the northeast are still very anti-US, still remembering the Korean and Vietnamese wars.

Changes in China's Security Environment and the Political Future of the Military

Edward Friedman

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The primary mission of China's military since the inception of the PLA has been the consolidation of the socialist state, that is, the further institutionalization of the power of the ruling groups of the Leninist system. At different times, the presupposition of international security has been refined by particular and changing strategic tasks, but the domestic premise has never varied.

In 1983, the international task was redefined so that the large, nuclear, and pressing war, the premise of security policy since 1964-1965, was no longer an immediate concern. Instead, the prime task assigned the military by Leninist ruling groups was raising standards of living through economic reform and an opening to the world market. That strategic task was meant to secure the continuing ruling preoccupation of consolidating the policy of the rulers, to strengthen their hold on power.

In 1983, the policy of the third front ended, the army was cut in size, and standards of recruitment were raised. Some military industry was turned to civilian purposes. Earning foreign exchange through foreign military sales replaced free arms for friends to serve the new policy priority. Long-term technological and scientific modernization were made top priorities. All of this would supposedly persuade China's alienated people that the regime at last would succeed in improving daily living conditions.

Whether it is 1949, 1954-55, 1983, or today, the major mission of the PLA in the Leninist system remains the same: consolidating the power of Leninist ruling groups. In 1983, post-Mao rulers found that their personal power preoccupation now required foreign exchange and less inflation, with

national strength and prestige found through high technology. National prestige is always the highest priority because nationalist passions are the most powerful, popular prop of the regime. Still, the new economic priority did not mean abjuring a willingness to use force, or at least to have a credible threat of using force in confronting major adversaries. Looking toward the twenty-first century, the question of adversary remains central: the issue of force against whom, how, and when.

Answers to these questions are still shaped by the priority need of consolidating the system. Leninists, a group who use artificial means to hold power, are always fearful of losing power, and, with it, their lives. The primary task of the military entering the 1990s is to instill loyalty to the rulers and forge armed forces that will stand against the enemies of the rulers, first and foremost, the potential domestic challengers and their purported foreign allies. What makes these tasks so complex in the 1990s is all signs indicate the rulers and the system are both increasingly illegitimate, with the overwhelming majority of politically conscious Chinese incapable of being moved, wooed, and won by Maoist propaganda.

And it is Maoist propaganda that the regime stresses since the spring 1989 democratic movement. During those earth-shaking days, it was not obvious where the military stood. Consequently, the ruling group must be suspicious of the military and not give it a mission which could facilitate its going over to the side of democrats or political reformers.

Yet so illegitimate is Maoism to the younger generations in the military, that the task assigned to them of consolidating the regime by propagating Maoism, actually discredits the regime. Rumors suggest that young officers mock or slight the propaganda line. To focus on media headlines about the propaganda line would miss the significance of

the military's silent rejection of the political line.

An analyst must therefore interpret public data in terms of a hidden but crucial and complex struggle underway that may offer clues as to where the military will go during the next eruption of the permanent succession crisis that bedevils all Leninist systems. The analyst must recognize that it is well-nigh impossible to see this struggle clearly. If outsiders could see the actual political interplay, then the rulers could, too, and they would act to quash all tendencies not in their own interest. Therefore, to have any hope of capturing the contradictory action of the military's role in regime security, primarily the security of the Leninist system itself, one must abjure waiting for sufficient data to establish a new reality: abjure assuming that tomorrow will be like today, only just a little different. This curious approach of waiting for all the data to be in may safeguard an analyst's career file. But such caution actually accepts blinders as a pseudo-realism that has almost invariably in the past made analysts seem naive when the next unexpected eruption reshaped the balance among ruling forces. To better tune antennae, bold analysis is required.

The issue on the agenda at the highest level of priority in Beijing is the survival of the system. Everyone is aware of transfers of regional military leaders and the raising of palace guard riot forces meant to safeguard the rulers. All know that the nature of the militaries in the Beijing Military Region as experienced by the rulers as crucial. No matter how wise the analysts' knowledge of institutional missions in China, of clashing political networks, and the general rules of bureaucratic politics, nonetheless, standard Kremlinological analysis, however shrewd, still cannot see back-room deals in the making.

What will be decisive in China has to be kept hidden to maintain its political potency. What analysts can already see is that the ruling groups' major remaining emotional hold on the loyalty of the military and the populace in general, they believe, is super-patriotism. This has meant a cultural chauvinist war against liberal values, a prideful claim of refusing to be bullied on matters such as arms sales, and a willingness to maintain a threat of force against Taiwan (and Hong Kong and Tibet).

The particulars of consolidating socialist power shape the security task of the military because the state in a Leninist system primarily serves the

private interests of the rulers. The issue of reunification with Taiwan is high on the agenda of China's surviving first generation rulers, because they view national reunification as central to their patriotic legitimization. The lessons of the 1991 war to liberate Kuwait, the Gulf War, were argued within the military and ruling groups in China in terms of meaning for the conquest of Taiwan. Iraq's conquest of small Kuwait seemed to show small Taiwan's vulnerability, while the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi invaders by an international coalition led by the big United States of America was taken, reinforcing the lesson of 1958 air battles with Taiwan's air force, as an indication of the vulnerability of China's military in confronting a higher technology military. That success also discredits China's Leninist rulers who refused to line up with the international coalition and instead saw moral force in the cause of little, Third World Iraq standing up to large, hegemonic America.

Given the priority of national unification, patriotic appeals, and Taiwan as a patriotic issue, the lesson of the Gulf War to rulers in Beijing is that their military must obtain needed high technology. That need will be redefined as a yet higher priority in China's new security environment, because regime security means appearing to China's people as the embodiment of Chinese nationalism and, for the first generation of rulers, the presupposition of patriotism is one united China ruled by Leninist anti-imperialists in Beijing. Consequently, China ever more needs openness to world science through purchase, exchange, and spying, access to the world market, and high technology research. Abandoning the open policy could make China's rulers seem traitors. Losing access to the societies of the industrially advanced world could make China's rulers seem as inept bunglers not worthy of holding power.

Some analysts do not give sufficient weight to the independent, high priority of the Taiwan issue in Beijing politics. To persuade Americans in the 1970s that normalization of relations with Beijing was not a contravention of American principles that made for an adversarial relationship between Washington and Moscow, Beijing's policies toward Taiwan were misperceived in America as merely defensive. The 1954-55 Taiwan Strait crisis was explained in terms of a Beijing response to US-Taiwan military security initiatives. In fact,

post-Mao revelations from China show that so high was the nationalistic priority issue of reunification with Taiwan that China's military even sought permission to launch an attack in the Taiwan Straits region during the Korean War.

The subsequent timing of the Taiwan Straits crisis was shaped by purely political factors of moment to China's rulers. Reunification with Taiwan has never ceased to be a high priority to China's Leninist patriots who will therefore do whatever is possible to advance that goal without contravening yet higher security priorities, such as continued access to high technology and advanced science. It matters very much, therefore, for a post-Mao ruling group seeking means to hold on to its nationalistic legitimacy that it devote great resources to pressing Taiwan toward reunification while also obtaining maximum economic benefits from the relationship. The obvious contradictions in the objectives suggests that policy analyses in Beijing on how to proceed are contested.

What is new in the 1990s is the appearance of an approaching horizon of the final dying of the last members of the original generation of anti-imperialist ideologues who would like to reunify all of China before they meet Marx, their maker. This means the rulers are feeling a more pressing need for action soon on the Taiwan issue, sobered, of course, both by the military technology significance of the Gulf War and by other yet higher priorities. The decision-makers are self-interested, super-patriotic ideologues, not war-mongering fanatics. Still, how will they comprehend a democratic Taiwan, where independence for the small Baltic nations further inspires nationalistic Taiwanese?

If the top priority of the regime is consolidating its hold on power, and if that priority highlights the importance of vital economic interchange with Taiwan, an island that is an alternative object of loyalty for non-mainland Chinese who are not Taiwanese but are also major sources of investment, trade, tourism, spying and smuggling, and if non-mainland Chinese are also the source of the so-called cultural pollution that spreads dissatisfaction and subverts the regime, then, again, the elimination of that Taiwan alternative, an ever more democratic pole of Chinese attraction, becomes an ever higher priority for China's illegitimate old guard, reactionary, Mao-oriented

ruling group that is so frightened of backers of the democratic project. Leninist politics and economic need are in conflict vis-à-vis Taiwan. Everything in the orientation of the era and the regime should make economic interest the first priority. Yet, for the chauvinistic rulers, consolidating their power, as with the era of Maoist rule, put politics in command.

Politics must seem insane to many in younger military generations who lack the Mao generation's prolonged civil war experience of conflict with Jiang Jieshi's forces. It was only Jiang's retreat to Taiwan that made Taiwan a nationalistic issue. A focus on reunification with Taiwan was never part of patriotic propaganda during the anti-Japan war. Rather, it was argued that on Taiwan, as in Korea, the people would pursue a liberation struggle against Japan. And by the 1990s, Jiang Jieshi is dead. So is his heir Jingguo. The Jiangs and the civil war generation are disappearing. Younger officers on the China mainland who see the need for the economic priority see neither Taiwan as an enemy nor non-mainland Chinese as potential polluters and subverters. They may not believe democracy is a disaster. The post-Mao regime's politicizing of China's highest economic security purposes would then seem to these younger military leaders as serving the narrow, private interests of a particular faction not in the national interest, and proof that the powerholders are outmoded, similar, if you will, to the August 1991 Soviet coup plotters whose backward notions were those of people completely out of touch with modern realities.

These younger military leaders do not experience Chinese nationalism as the anti-imperialist Maoist generation does. The younger leaders are more likely to identify China's future with China's south, with a confident project of competitive openness to the world (including [not opposing] Taiwanese and other non-mainland Chinese as economic brothers and potentially beneficial partners), while the older generation of decision-makers is seen as northern heirs of backward hinterland peasants who have hurt China by seeking security by walling her off from the rest of the world. These conclusion about competing nationalisms in China are based on a great deal of recent research. Still, there is no need for a separate paper on how regional identities lead to new national identities if an analyst will but project from the premise that the same conflict between reforms of economic decentralization with

the centralized Leninist dictatorship works its way in China as in Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, and the former USSR.

If it is true that young military leaders see the security approach of China's anti-democratic old guard to Taiwan as in a particular group's private interest, and not in the national interest, it is also likely that they see the policies of that illegitimate ruling group as not in the institutional interest of the Chinese military. While they may be kept loyal by the prestige of a Deng Xiaoping or Chen Yun, that factor has a time limit. Indeed, it is the piling up of issues and forces into the two opposing Maoist and modernist tendencies which makes it likely this assumption of a deep political fissure waiting for a political earthquake takes us to the heart of the hidden forces contending beneath the surface, forces that will eventually surface and shape the future.

The force of open-minded nationalists see that the narrow-minded nationalists have destroyed the reputation of the Chinese military with the Chinese people. This is the central political security concern of young officers. This rupture is experienced as having begun in the Cultural Revolution when China's military was used "to support the left," in fact becoming enmeshed in local factional struggles, often on the side of torturers and murderers, as in the campaign to ferret out May 16th elements in Nanjing, but always as integral to a meaningless and monstrous horror that threatened to shred the nation.

The older generation of narrow national military leaders that in the 1980s and after stood with the post-Mao anti-democratic project did not protect the reputation of the military, but, instead, went along with Mao's Cultural Revolution, anti-nationalist inhumanities. This process of alienating the people from the military intensified in the post-Mao era when the military suppressed all criticisms of its crimes and allowed its sore on the body politic to fester and spread. Senior military Leninist fundamentalists joined with Deng Xiaoping to send young Chinese to die in a war in Vietnam in 1979, an unpopular and unnecessary war. More recently, senior military did not block the 4 June 1989 Beijing Massacre, although good evidence suggests opposition in the military to the massacre. Indeed the senior military group at the state center has been drawn more intimately into the anti-popular project of the illegitimate rulers by allowing itself to be presented to the nation as the embodiment of Maoist

purity to exterminate liberal materialism.

Younger military leaders are known to try to distance themselves from the massacre, beginning political talks to civilian groups by pointing out one way or another that their units did not participate in the Beijing Massacre. There is evidence that these younger officers do not oppose letting the truth be known about the participation of the military, led by the fundamentalists, in pre-1949 massacre and torture. All the fundamentalists seem able to do is to censor, hide the truth, and lie. The truth of military privilege and corruption is ordinary political gossip that exposes the hypocrisy of a regime claiming to ban relatives of highest leaders from lucrative international economic deals, while, in fact, the kin of senior leaders continue work in the arms export business. This, too, probably alienates much of the young more professional military which sees competitors prospering based on non-merit criteria.

There is evidence that in China's south civilian officials have tried to woo local military officers with a stake in the open, civilian economy and that the local military takes care of its own financially, whatever the orders from Beijing. In short, there are numerous clues pointing to a major split in the military along generational and geographical lines that, in the context of what the young and southern-identified officers experience as broad-minded nationalism, makes the national security imperative of the narrow-minded, old-fashioned, anti-imperialist military, identified as from the backward northern hinterland, seem crazy, self-destructive, anti-military, and hypocritical. This pattern of forces suggests that in another crisis, either of succession or politics, the army could well split, with the bulk of the force not standing with what it increasingly perceives as a reactionary, anti-popular, out-moded old guard.

The old guard leadership still embraces Maoism, People's War, and political indoctrination as primary security tasks. These are not congruent with the agreed need to stress science and technology through openness. The old guard is in conflict with what is presuppositional to the new nationalism. The younger, southern-identified group sees this continued stress on Maoism as keeping China backward and undermining the obvious cause of national dignity. The Maoists' Lei Feng campaign is universally laughable in China. The palpable absurdity that, in the Gulf War, Iraq was defined in

Maoist terms as a moral, small nation threatened by a hegemonic, large United States is probably widely understood in China's military as having isolated China from the anti-Iraq coalition, an isolation which puts obstacles in the way of China attempts to obtain access to the science and technology necessary for military modernization. It makes the narrow-minded military leaders seem a dangerous anachronism. In short, the security imperatives of the narrow nationalists seem emotionally ridiculous and analytically rejectionable. An analyst should assume that the open-minded generation looks for ever more proof for their finding that the senior reactionary leaders do not serve China. The proof must seem obvious.

These polarizing tendencies within the military may be intensified by the major new security mission of the Chinese military in the era of Moscow-Washington entente and the diminution or disappearance of a military threat from the Soviet Union. The narrow nationalists imagine China's twenty-first century security in terms of a complex relation and military race with Japan. On the one hand, for China to rise rapidly, she has to join with Japan's economic dynamism, a joining eased by the belief in Beijing that Japan's business-oriented rulers will not pester China on matters of democracy and human rights, an assumption that may soon prove incorrect.

On the other hand, for the anti-imperialist ruling group of Leninist fundamentalists, China is politically at least the equal of Japan. China is and ought to be one of the few great powers of the world. Since rulers in Beijing believe Japan must soon take a more military course to defend its growing Asian economic interests, and this projection of Japanese military force will exacerbate anti-Japan feelings throughout East and Southeast Asia, China's rulers find that a militarily strong and politically active Beijing will be welcome throughout Asia as a counterweight to Japan, as Bangkok has welcomed Beijing as a counter to Hanoi.

Economically, consequently, Leninist China will survive and prosper in an Asian twenty-first century. Politically, China will become the political leader of the world's most economically dynamic region. My hunch is that the open minded nationalists will see this Japan policy as folly and fantasy. A dual policy towards Japan in Asia even conflicts with the narrow nationalist propaganda which tries to use and

manipulate movies of the anti-Japan war era to foster narrow patriotic fires of popular support in China. The dual policy also conflicts with a Chinese need for economic strength by playing off all key factors in the world market, including the European Community democracies, the democratic US, East Europe, and possibly democratic Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, and India.

In focussing on one nation, Japan, and ignoring the new international order, such as the role of the G7, China's narrow nationalists will act blindly and self-destructively. In short, the security priority of consolidating the Leninist dictatorship in the 1990s is going to be experienced within the military and without as a self-serving policy of a narrow, reactionary, and illegitimate group that will hurt the Chinese nation, including injuring its dignity, as it relies ever more on Japan (while "secretly" competing against Japan). Consequently, the force of a new nationalism, both in the military and out, will be looking for leaders of an alternative politics, one that is less embarrassing than a singular embrace of Japan, a policy of the old guard that is in conflict with some of its own propaganda and is guaranteed to alienate such patriotic opinion in China.

What is at issue at the highest level of Chinese nationalism is the nature of the Chinese nation to be protected. The premise of post-Mao reform is that Mao's reactionary, narrow nationalism kept China backward. Yet, political priorities force this old guard into a Maoist mode that they have already discredited. The nation that Mao imagined, even before the inauguration of the People's Republic of China, was one that would be the military equal of any nation. China would again be one of the few militarily great powers. Consequently, Mao's nation began recruiting nuclear scientists to return home even before 1 October 1949. China committed itself to massive, priority nuclear weapon and missile delivery programs because such weapons supposedly would make China great. As with the 1990s security policy toward Japan, the Leninists were not trying to deter a threat. Rather, they were asserting a Chinese power position in the world and establishing nationalist credentials to legitimate their right to rule.

But the younger, more open-minded military leaders in the 1990s can see this priority project, as with Mao era policies of massive foreign aid and free weapons to foreign friends, as a betrayal of the

priority needs of the Chinese people. Continuing a definition of China's military needs and nationhood that requires equivalence with Japanese high technology reflects a similar and continuing preoccupation with costly national greatness in terms of extraordinary military outlays that impoverish much of the rest of the poor and long-suffering Chinese nation. A prosperous Chinese people with a modern, competitive economy can not be built premised on that narrow, outmoded, Maoist militarist definition of patriotism.

Surely Japan does not threaten China militarily. Surely China can readily deter Japan militarily. There are few nations as vulnerable as Japan to nuclear attack. Hence, a new technology arms race with Japan is not in fact a security interest. It is, rather, as with the discredited security policy of Mao himself, the imperative of a chauvinist group committed to a wasteful project in their own private power interest. Its absurdity is reflected in the popular treatment of its leading spokesman, He Xin. He is popularly experienced as a laughing stock. The new security doctrine is absolutely illegitimate. It would seem likely to backfire politically. In sum, the security policy of the post Beijing massacre reactionary Chinese rulers must seem ridiculous to that younger generation of more open-minded southern-identified military officers.

The regime's 1990s response to the new strategic environment, nonetheless, is to build a military capable of challenging Taiwan and equaling Japan. It is not in fact a response to a military security environment but to a political security environment of unpopular ruling groups seeking some means to attract super-patriotic Chinese passions by making themselves the source of super-nationalist pride. But if, as this analysis suggests, that security policy appears to politically active Chinese as what it really is, then security policy intensifies contradictions in

and out of the military and makes it increasingly likely that Chinese officers already are discussing alternatives to Leninist, fundamentalist rule. Continuity in politics, therefore, is not an unchallenged outcome.

Whether this laughable 1990s security policy adopted by unpopular Chinese chauvinists will facilitate a federative democracy, chaos, division, a military coup identifying with the economic project of Pinochet, a military coup identifying with the patriotic project of Nassar, or a military coup identifying with the stable, dictatorial development policy of Suharto remains unclear. The outcome will emerge from political combat. The officers will see themselves as defending stability and evolution against an out-of-touch group promoting chaos and stagnation. It is believed that Chinese military people do discuss these various militarist projects of Pinochet, Nassar, and Suharto.

In sum, if one combines what is established fact with most likely Leninist tendencies, then the conclusion seems inescapable that the Chinese military is split, ruling security policy is not popular, and many in the military are looking for political alternatives to the laughable line of challenging Taiwan and equaling Japan, such that it would be as dangerous in 1991 (as in 1957 or 1965) to assume that next year and the one after must simply reflect a peaceful continuation with the apparent politics of the moment.

Given the known record of the pseudo-realist China watchers for never foreseeing actual turns in Chinese policy because of the worship only of known facts, whatever the earthquakes ready to remake the seemingly tranquil surface, therefore, this paper offers an analysis that risks trying to probe deeper to explore hidden tendencies that could, in the not too distant future, change China's political landscape.

PRC Evaluation of DESERT STORM: National Security Implications

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Introduction

Reaction in the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the August 1990 Persian Gulf crisis and the war of January-February 1991 tells us as much about internal Chinese politics as it does about national security policy or military issues.

The focus of this study is upon internal Chinese responses to DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM. Regarding geopolitical issues, this cannot improve on Ellis Joffe's *China After the Gulf War*, published by the Sun Yat-sen Center for Policy Studies in May 1991.¹ The Gulf War allowed China to escape its post-Tiananmen diplomatic isolation. On the other hand, it substantially weakened the Chinese position in the Middle East, which had been based largely on weapons sales, notably to Iraq. Owing to the continuing embargo, it will be impossible, or at least extremely hard, for China to resume selling arms to Iraq. The PRC continues to sell weapons to other Middle Eastern powers, but in view of the way the war exposed the failings of Chinese equipment, sales of conventional arms are likely to suffer. Another problem created by the war is the \$3-4 billion debt which Iraq still owes China for arms, equipment, and labor, which is a bill that will not be paid soon if ever.²

Perhaps the most important effect on China's international stature is that the Gulf War emphasized the number of other nuclear or near-nuclear powers in the Middle East (Israel and Iraq). This is important because China's international stature really rests upon its membership in two exclusive "clubs." Its status as one of the five permanent

members of the UN Security Council continues. The other exclusive "club" to which China belongs is the "nuclear club." It has been presumed that a nuclear power, no matter how primitive, is a special kind of country and an important state whose interests and wishes must be considered. However, the nuclear club is becoming less exclusive.

PRC nuclear weapons are few and relatively primitive. Just having them no longer accords China the military credibility it once did. Moreover, renewed emphasis on highly sophisticated conventional weapons has further called China's big power status into question. If a nation's military capability is evaluated in terms of sophisticated conventional weapons, China stands inferior to such third-rate military powers as Argentina, Singapore, and Taiwan.³

Pre-Crisis (1980-1990)

In the 1980s, the Chinese developed the doctrine of "People's War Under Modern Conditions," which (in my view) was a modification of the earlier Maoist doctrine of "People's War."⁴ This strategic doctrine envisioned the defense of China against a Soviet invasion by a combination of mobile mechanized operations by People's Liberation Army (PLA) regular forces, positional defense by regional forces, and guerrilla warfare in the enemy's rear by the People's Militia. The main forces' mobile defense was envisioned as maneuver warfare somewhat like the United States Army's active defense doctrine of the 1970s.

In later 1985, the Chinese Communist Party's Central Military Commission (CMC) decreed a new strategic doctrine: global nuclear warfare was no longer inevitable. For the foreseeable future, the world scene would be characterized by small "regional and local wars."

The breakdown of the Warsaw Pact and the

general lessening of the Soviet threat in 1989 and 1990 led many Chinese and Western analysts to see a breakdown in the bipolar world order. While some Western and neutral sources saw this situation casting the United States as the only great power, official Chinese preferred to view the situation as leading to a period of instability and conflict, which would provoke a build-up in high technology weapons among various developing states. This process would cause frequent limited regional wars. According to Chinese analysts, the turbulence eventually would lead to a "multipolar strategic pattern" centered on the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and the European Community, plus a few other emergent regional powers like India.⁵ To some degree, of course, Chinese strategic thinkers were engaging in wishful thinking in denying the possibility of American monopolar domination.

According to post-1985 Chinese doctrine, limited war can take different forms under a wide variety of circumstances, so appropriate forces must be extremely flexible (not a characteristic of most PLA units). Moreover, an authoritative statement from the National Defense University pointed out the importance of close political control, because these wars tend to be fought for carefully circumscribed political goals. It also stressed the importance of modern high technology for fighting and controlling limited military actions. In 1987, *Liberation Army News (LAN)* observed, "A warship, a special unit composed of several dozen men, or several aircraft can directly threaten the other side's core command organization and important military installations." It approvingly cited the October 1985 Israeli air raid 2,400 km from Israel in Tunisia which left PLO headquarters in ruins.⁶ Chinese sources also cited the British Falklands (Malvinas) war of 1982 and the American bombing of Libya in 1986 as successful limited war operations.

The emphasis on quick decisive results and high technology was a major break with traditional doctrines of People's War and People's War Under Modern Conditions. Limited war doctrine emphasizes rapid reaction forces (RRUs): well-equipped, well trained, fast-moving professional armed forces operating on China's periphery and the antithesis of defensive mass mobilization and protracted resistance in the interior.

Emphasis on regional and local wars was characteristic of "professional military" thinking within the PLA and its various think tanks from 1986 through 1989. In the aftermath of the Tiananmen Massacre of 4 June 1989, the attractiveness of rapid reaction forces was enhanced by their obvious utility in putting down internal dissent or rebellion.

At the National People's Congress (NPC) session in March 1990, a much increased defense budget of RMB (*renminbi*) 28.97 billion was announced, up from 1989's defense budget of RMB 25.1 billion. This was 11.4 percent of the total national budget, constituting a 15.2 percent increase, compared to an overall increase of only 4.8 percent in government spending.⁷ This was the first real increase in military spending in almost 10 years.⁸

It has been widely supposed that the 1990 defense budget increase was a reward for the Tiananmen Massacre, or a bribe for continued PLA loyalty. If so, it was miserly one, which was largely devoted to improving soldiers' living conditions.⁹ Another budgetary priority was the shift to internal security forces. Riot control gear and associated equipment were purchased for the People's Armed Police (FAP) and selected PLA rapid reaction units. As a July 1989 *Liberation Army News* article pointed out, "suppressing class enemies" remains a primary PLA mission.¹⁰

PLA "professionals" who had been arguing for rapid reaction forces apparently turned Tiananmen to their advantage, at least in the budget process. Nor were "military professionals" noticeably less apparent after the PLA personnel shakeup of 1990. Of about 100 newly promoted officers, all but a few held positions that made them "logical contenders" for promotion to their new jobs. Even if they had been vetted politically, those promoted into positions vacated by retired, disgraced, or transferred officers were well-qualified in terms of professional military training and experience.¹¹

Moreover, these new leaders advocate combat readiness as a principal focus of PLA work. In late 1990, PLA logistics modernization got much favorable press, and a new book on the subject was published with considerable fanfare.¹² Twenty institutions were certified to begin awarding master's degrees in military science.¹³ In January 1991, there was a long article in *Liberation Army News* on military academies which emphasized professional military priorities in unambiguous

terms: "The most important task that the troops have to fulfill through their routine work is military training and internal management."¹⁴ Thus, the PLA entered the summer of 1990 with a strongly professional cast of mind still dominant within its high command.

By the eve of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, even senior PLA leaders were calling for elite rapid reaction units armed with high technology equipment for air, land, and sea operations. In June, such a course was recommended as a "strategic priority," for example, by Zhang Taiheng, commander of the Chengdu Military Region (MR).¹⁵ In May 1990, *Naval and Merchant Ships* published an effusive story on the PLA navy's Amphibious Reconnaissance Unit (*zhongdui*), which seems to be an approximation of US Navy SEALs.¹⁶ In early August, *China Youth News* heaped dewy-eyed praise on an RRU of the Guangzhou MR, emphasizing its modernity, the high education level of unit officers, and the elite *esprit de corps*. The unit's motto is "Honor, Responsibility, and Mission." This almost incredibly professional motto is reportedly, "the main content of our ideological and political work."¹⁷

DESERT SHIELD:

2 August 1990 - 17 January 1991

Officially, China condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and called for its withdrawal. The PRC held to that official position throughout the entire crisis, and either voted for or abstained from the various United Nations Security Council resolutions that led up to the war.¹⁸ Despite this official position, Chinese leaders' comments and media commentary from August through January was sympathetic to Iraq. The Chinese seemed to be rooting for Iraq because, like China, it was a developing country. Moreover, the PRC arms sales of the 1980s had established political and personal ties with Iraq's military.

Perhaps most important, from the Chinese point of view, Saddam Hussein seemed to be talking about engaging the United States with an Iraqi version of People's War Under Modern Conditions. Saddam struck a resonant chord in Beijing when he predicted that his mobilized population would defeat the effete and decadent Americans. Iraq would rely upon its

well-equipped, experienced, disciplined soldiers, and its geographical and climatic advantages.¹⁹ At the geostrategic level, the Chinese also may have hoped that a humiliating setback at Iraqi hands would reduce America's global influence. Humiliation of the United States would tend to counterbalance the recent weakening of the USSR, pulling the US down to the level of the other major powers. Ideally, it might cause its loss of status as the reigning superpower. This was particularly important for Beijing in view of the continuing American-led diplomatic, economic, and military sanctions following Tiananmen.

During the DESERT SHIELD period, *Liberation Army News (LAN)* published a number of studies analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the opposing sides in the Gulf. Its preliminary analysis in August 1990 enumerated both sides' major weapons systems and weighed their strengths and weaknesses. *Liberation Army News* acknowledged that the United States and its allies had a gigantic advantage in air and naval forces but suggested that Iraq's large, well-equipped, well-trained, battle-hardened, disciplined army had the advantage on the ground. The United States obviously would not have as easy a task dealing with Iraq as it had in its "aggression" against Grenada, Libya, and Panama.²⁰

On 17 December, *Liberation Army News* added that Iraqi forces had a significant advantage in the "human factor," because the American people lacked conviction in the moral correctness of their involvement in the conflict. One analyst laid out the allied superiority in air forces, night operations, and intelligence capabilities but emphasized that it was impossible for the coalition to achieve final victory using air power alone. He suggested that the United States had amassed such overwhelming forces in the Gulf as a form of deterrent strategy to bluff Iraq into withdrawing from Kuwait without actually having to resort to war.²¹

Evidently, China (and quite possibly Iraq) really did not believe the United States would risk combat against battle-tested Iraqi forces. Beijing also seemed to feel that if the war did escalate to actual combat, American forces would be hamstrung by political interference. PRC leaders seemed to be confident that Iraq would be able to hold out for long enough (the usual time period suggested was one month) to cause sustained serious American

casualties which would force the Americans to compromise or withdraw.

PRC leaders reportedly conferred on the situation on 16-17 January. They decided the war was "a struggle between global and regional hegemonisms," and that the US intended to "dominate the world." China would refrain from openly criticizing the US for the time being but, presumably, would weigh in diplomatically on Iraq's side if and when the situation changed.²²

In December-January 1991, *Liberation Army News* repeatedly asserted that the United States could not possibly win against Iraq or anyone else with air power alone. It would be necessary to invade Kuwait and probably Iraq itself. Iraq's trump card was its ability to draw the United States into a lengthy bloodletting on the ground. If Iraq could prolong the war more than a month and inflict heavy losses, the US-led coalition would fall apart and be forced to negotiate a political settlement. That would amount to a big moral victory for Iraq, and a humiliation for the United States.²³ Without actually using the term, the Chinese press was describing an Iraqi application of People's War Under Modern Conditions.

On 18 January 1991, the eve of hostilities, *Liberation Army News* stated that the American effort in DESERT SHIELD had been a spectacular example of "operational-level deterrence." The United States was "prudent and apprehensive" about getting bogged down in a ground war.²⁴ Boggling the Americans down was seen as Iraq's decisive strategic weapon.

On 22 January 1991, a Hong Kong publication released parts of a document written by He Xin, a conservative polemicist who had been a driving force in the post-1989 purges in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.²⁵ He Xin's analysis, written on the eve of the air war, reportedly was regarded as so important that each member of the Politburo received a copy. He wrote that if the United States were to win quickly, the victory would intensify American-Japanese-European contradictions, while motivating the United States to attack China next. This was unlikely to happen, however, because Islam and Iraqi nationalism were such strong, cohesive forces that Iraq would be able to protract the war and lead the United States to economic collapse. He Xin predicted that if Iraq were able to hold out for one month, the United

States would suffer a "Waterloo."²⁶

The He Xin document is interesting for several reasons. He is a member of Li Peng's conservative brain trust rather than a military think tank. His analysis is a minority opinion that smacks of self-serving wishful thinking. In explicitly "Maoist" terms, He Xin wrote that, "Even though the multinational forces led by the United States are armed to the teeth, they are still paper tigers and must still consider economic and moral factors." He added that the situation demonstrated that Chairman Mao's theory of People's War was still valid. "This far-sighted policy is not out of date today to guide developing countries in defending themselves."²⁷

He Xin became "influential" by telling PRC leaders what they wanted to hear. If the document was, in fact, distributed to the Politburo, and if it in any way reflected or affected their thinking, it goes some way toward explaining why hardline leaders recently have claimed that China is about to be attacked by the United States.

In December 1990, as Operation DESERT SHIELD proceeded, Zhang Shuyun, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Nanjing Military Region, warned that the PLA must begin improving its weapons and training because local wars on China's periphery could start at anytime.²⁸

Early 1991 saw a noticeable upsurge in military training and reemphasis on technical modernization, including large-scale combined arms exercises. The reemphasis on training, combat readiness, and professional military priorities and criteria was publicized in the civilian, as well as the military, news media.²⁹ According to a *People's Daily* report,

*The large number of military units joining this year's training has been rare in recent years. In some military regions, over 97 percent of their divisions, brigades, and regiments have engaged in military training, and military units joining this training are basically up to the demand for complete equipment and full attendance To improve training quality, many units have conducted all kinds of skill competitions.*³⁰

The Air War: 17 January - 24 February 1991

Initially, PLA leaders appeared to be extremely interested in coalition air operations and the weapons systems used. For about the first 20 days,

Liberation Army News devoted most of an entire page of each four-page edition to reporting and commentary on the air war. Coverage included a daily feature column that introduced various high technology weapons. There was also analysis on the progress of the war in the paper's "military forum" column. Initially, *Liberation Army News* was quite graphic in its description of the absolute air superiority of the coalition. On 18 January, it showcased the sophistication of Western weapons systems, emphasizing night-vision equipment and electronic warfare, the extended ranges and massive payloads of aircraft, the comprehensive reconnaissance and surveillance capabilities of the Western allies, and their early-warning and intelligence systems. *Liberation Army News* also described the air transport system and long-range command, control, and communications (C³). These early reports also tended to dismiss the capabilities of Iraq's Soviet-made aircraft.

By week two of the war, however, Chinese sympathy for Iraq as the underdog began to re-emerge. On 25 January, *Liberation Army News* noted that the United States had chosen to exploit its night attack equipment despite its massive air superiority because it feared that Iraqi ability to operate in daylight. This, they emphasized, was because the United States was extremely concerned about holding down casualties. However, the article went on to warn readers that soldiers equipped with low-technology weapons (like the PLA) were at a distinct tactical disadvantage at night because of the "technical revolution." A veteran PLA Air Force cadre recalled that American forces had been at a disadvantage in night-fighting in Korea and Vietnam, but with the new night-vision technology they had reversed that, turning the darkness into an advantage. The new technology, he said, was particularly important in local wars because it placed the armed forces of developing countries in a "passive position." He recommended that the PLA assign top priority to developing night-vision technology.³¹

As the coalition air assault proceeded and the accuracy and destructiveness of the attacks were publicized, PRC media began questioning whether the attacks were really effective. Also on 25 January, in a lengthy analysis of the air war, *Liberation Army News* reminded its readers that air attacks were no substitute for a decisive ground campaign. Iraqi

forces were tremendously skilled at camouflage and fortifications. They would remain intact at the end of the air war and inflict heavy casualties should the coalition forces dare to attack on the ground.³² Chinese media now implied that, although the US-led coalition had dared to launch an air attack, it still didn't have the stomach to go in on the ground against Iraq's well-prepared army.³³ The Hong Kong publication *Liaowang* claimed that the air strikes were having only limited effect against the "formidable" air defenses of Iraq, particularly the passive defenses. *Liaowang* emphasized the extensive underground fortifications and bunkers protecting C³ systems, aircraft, and ground units. Iraqi engineers also had set up massive arrays of decoys and fake targets upon which the coalition forces were wasting their ammunition. Iraqi forces were said to be prepared for a highly effective ground defense which would sap the morale of coalition soldiers and cause the American people to withdraw their support for the war.³⁴

The Persian Gulf situation apparently influenced the National Two Support Work Conference of January 1991, where the earlier National Defense Education movement was linked to Two-Supports Education.³⁵ In March, the coalition air campaign seems to have prompted linkage of the National Defense Education movement to renewed interest in People's Air Defense (civil defense in the United States). People's Air Defense has not gotten much press in recent years, since it is associated with older versions of People's War.³⁶ As I will argue below, the reasons for resurrecting the specter of foreign air attack, while strengthening ties between PLA units and local governments, were primarily internal and non-military. Both actions would help overcome local autonomy and re-centralize Beijing's economic and political control.³⁷

To the official media, Iraq's occupation of the Saudi border town of Khafji in late January seemed to confirm that Saddam Hussein's counterattack capability remained intact, while American ground reconnaissance was inadequate. The Americans had obviously underestimated the Iraqi ground forces. Saddam surely could prolong the war and cause serious casualties among coalition forces.³⁸ On 20 February, *Wen Wei Po* proclaimed that Saddam Hussein had already won. He was the political victor because he had held off the coalition for over a month and would soon force the United States to

negotiate a settlement. Soviet President Gorbachev's last-minute initiative to negotiate a settlement seemed to confirm this analysis.³⁹

According to *Tokyo Shimbun*, Chinese leaders decided in late January to restrict reportage on the war "for the sake of unity at home." It is unclear whether this was more because of the increasingly pro-Iraqi sentiment among PRC Muslims, or because of enthusiastic pro-coalition sentiment and "hardware fascination" among the Hans. When the leadership met to discuss the decision, it was reportedly Li Ruihuan who advocated continued open reportage while Li Peng argued against it.⁴⁰ As I will argue at the conclusion, this "moderates versus hardliners" line-up was not coincidental.

On 21 January, reports of the Gulf War disappeared from the front page of *People's Daily*. On or about 6 February, the PRC media became noticeably more strident in its praise of Iraq's staying power, and *Liberation Army News* finally cut its war coverage to less than one-quarter page. On 10 February, it stopped direct reporting on the war and ended its special column on high technology weapons. From then on, even *Liberation Army News* confined its coverage to brief items emphasizing international efforts to seek a peaceful settlement. Even during the ground war began, its coverage was restricted to a few short reports on inner pages.

Another reason for press restrictions was a new "ideological" problem arising from the war. Despite official efforts to minimize the scope of the American-led coalition's victory, PLA men reportedly became:

... deeply interested in the modern aircraft, tanks, rockets, and guided missiles of the United States. They often said in private that "the Americans are really terrific." Thus, the higher authorities are very much apprehensive that the trend of worshipping and fearing the United States may spread in the whole army.⁴¹

Still, PLA media continued to show unseemly interest in the war's advanced technology. *PLA Pictorial* featured a two-page color spread in its March issue. Chinese-made equipment was conspicuously absent from the presentation, as was any commentary on how well or badly the various Western and Soviet weapons systems had

performed.⁴²

The Chinese language press in Hong Kong showed no inhibitions at all. *World Military Affairs*, for example, gave heavy, uninterrupted, and fairly even-handed emphasis to the War. Even *Commilit*, published in Hong Kong by the PRC Commission for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND), extensively covered everything from US Navy aircraft carrier operations in the Gulf to ground forces logistics.⁴³

During the first three months of 1991, the Central Military Commission (CMC) and other special commissions met to consider the implications of the Gulf War. Their evolving views were reflected by the dwindling war news in *Liberation Army News*. They had horribly miscalculated Saddam Hussein's ability to conduct war against the United States, and that called into question the whole notion of People's War Under Modern Conditions. On the other hand, it strongly reinforced much of what the professional military had been saying about regional and local wars and the need for high technology and highly trained forces. On the geostrategic level, some CMC leaders apparently were convinced that the United States, buoyed by its easy victory over Iraq, would be considerably more aggressive globally, particularly in bringing greater pressure on China.⁴⁴

Between January and May 1991, at least seven high level meetings addressed the Gulf War and its implications for China. At these meetings a majority of Chinese leaders identified an urgent need to reassess the PRC's defense development strategy, and to accelerate the defense science and technology effort. An enlarged CMC meeting convened on 11 January 1991. Yang Shangkun told the meeting that war in the Middle East appeared to be inevitable and that it marked the period in which international disputes would be settled in regional or local wars. These would be fierce three-dimensional (air, land, and sea) wars, said Yang. He urged the PLA to accelerate its research and development (R&D) program to obtain sophisticated military equipment.⁴⁵

The conclusions of the 1991 meetings were anticipated in a remarkable article published in June 1990 by two naval officers in *Economics Studies*.⁴⁶ They argued for a much bigger defense budget (at least two, ideally three percent of GNP) which would expand proportionately with GNP growth.

The authors agreed with nearly all foreign observers that the PLA was still much too large, and that excessive personnel costs had eaten up the savings that the 1985-87 force reductions were supposed to produce.⁴⁷ While some of their statistics appeared questionable and their analysis blatantly served Navy interests, most foreign observers also would agree with the three aspects in which they said "too much, and a too rapid, decrease in military expenditure" had damaged the PLA in the 1980s:

First, the modernization of China's national defense has been held up. Second, the livelihood of officers and soldiers ... has become difficult. Third, the production program extensively launched in the army for maintaining the original scale of military expenditure will inevitably result in lax discipline and a decrease in the army's combat effectiveness.

It seems that these two naval officers reflected (or influenced?) the opinions of the PLA high command. The enlarged meeting of the CMC in January 1991 decided upon a much increased defense budget, largely directed toward more R&D spending. Reportedly, the meeting also decided to gradually reduce the manpower of the PLA by an additional 500,000 men by about 1996.⁴⁸

Early 1991 also saw the introduction of a new "sixteen character slogan," embodying revised principles for military industrial development: "Integrating military with civilian, and peacetime with wartime; giving top priority to the production of military necessities; and relying on the people in maintaining the Army." The new policy implies that while military industry will still be largely devoted to civilian production, clear priority will henceforth go to military production, and especially to military R&D.

This is a significant change. The PLA seems to have partly regained the industrial priority it lost during the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, the relationship of civilian and military R&D seems to have been reversed. Military research will have first call on funding, in the expectation that it will spin off benefits to the civilian sector, rather than visa versa.⁴⁹ According to one PLA researcher, "Continued efforts should be made in the future to restructure the defense industry, implementing the 16-Chinese-character principle, and strengthen [sic] the transformation capacity from peacetime to

wartime."⁵⁰ He did not mention that the military industrial ministries have been in a perpetual state of "restructuring" for well over a decade.

The CMC held a second enlarged meeting in early February, specifically addressing the weapons R&D program as it related to the Eighth Five-Year Plan and the Ten-Year Development Plan which were soon to be presented to the NPC. Air Force Commander Wang Hai complained to the meeting the PLA Air Force lacked sophisticated airplanes.⁵¹

Yang Shangkun attended a third CMC meeting in early March and announced the decision to allocate an additional 30 million yuan for defense spending during the length of the Eighth Five-Year Plan. It is not clear whether the decision was made at this meeting or one of the earlier ones. According to *Far East Economic Review*, the decision might have been made as early as December. In any event, the top leadership would supposedly guarantee the funds, which were to be used exclusively for military R&D. Yang identified some key areas to be emphasized, including sophisticated combat aircraft; air-to-air, air-to-ground, ground-to-air, and air-to-ship missiles; ocean-going warships; ground-force night-fighting devices; and long-range artillery. Yang reemphasized that the weakest aspect of PLA ground forces was the lack of mobility and firepower in mechanized forces.⁵²

By the time the budget was promulgated at the NPC plenum in March, these priorities had been powerfully reenforced by the spectacular military victory over Iraq.⁵³ In presenting the military budget, Finance Minister Wang Bingqian "explain[ed]" that the PLA needed more funds to modernize defence in order to handle unexpected changes in the increasingly complicated international arena.⁵⁴ A 13 percent increase in the defense budget was announced, raising the budget to 32.5 billion yuan. Lieutenant General Shen Rongjun, Vice-Minister of COSTIND, told army delegates to the NPC that the increased military budget would help the PLA build a comprehensive force able to cope with modern warfare. He said that modern strategy and tactics were impossible without such advanced technologies as electronics, optics, lasers, aerospace, and new materials.⁵⁵

General Liu Huaqing told the delegates that the Gulf War had proven conclusively that sophisticated weapons were vital in local war and that China had to develop them in order to protect its national

interests. Defense Minister Qin Jiwei warned the NPC that China's military equipment was 20 years behind that used by coalition forces in the Gulf, so a much larger military budget was necessary to catch up.⁵⁶

There was a wave of lessons learned literature in the press following the Gulf War, all of it emphasizing that China had to rapidly acquire high tech weaponry.⁵⁷ There was a national meeting on upgrading science and technology in early March 1991, and a conference marking the fifth anniversary of the "863 program" on 22-25 April.⁵⁸ From 22-27 May, the Fourth National Conference of the China Science and Technology Association met in Beijing. All these meetings focused on developing new science and technology programs for the military. The S&T Association meeting particularly stressed the strong support given to its members' R&D efforts by Deng Xiaoping.⁵⁹

The same meeting was addressed by party chief Jiang Zemin, who told them that advanced S&T contributed directly to China's "comprehensive national strength." Through the spring of 1991, Jiang portrayed himself as an enthusiast for high technology and military readiness. During an inspection of PLA units in Hunan in March, Jiang said:

*It is an essential part of our army's modernization program to attach importance to scientific and technological progress and to foster trans-century high technology professionals who are up to the political standard Lagging behind in scientific and technological development will land oneself in a passive position vulnerable to attack.*⁶⁰

On 22 March, *Liberation Army News* said air power had become vital to winning local wars such as the one in the Persian Gulf.⁶¹

Priorities

Addressing the National People's Congress, COSTIND Vice Minister General Nie Li said that the most important lesson the PLA learned from the Gulf War was the importance of developing electronic warfare systems. She specifically mentioned jamming, night-vision devices, and air defense missiles. Jiang Zemin also identified the electronics sector as the key to defense R&D during

the fifth Five-Year Plan. Jiang instructed COSTIND to integrate the R&D of its electronic research organs to accelerate acquisition of new systems.⁶²

Taking up this theme on 26 April, *Liberation Army News* said "domination of the electronic spectrum" was the key to victory in modern warfare. The PLA, however, lacks sophisticated electronics systems and cannot risk concentrating its forces to launch a surprise attack. Moreover, the PLA has lost its traditional superiority in night combat because of the development of night-vision devices. A 12 April article in *LAN* stressed that modern night-vision equipment and electronics had also changed the nature of naval operations. Both articles urged the PLA to develop new night countermeasures and tactics.

Since March 1991, the State Council has ordered construction of 26 "high-tech development zones" in cities across China, plus additions to the existing one in Beijing. By July, "several billion dollars" worth of computer equipment was being installed in state factories, whose upgrading Deng Xiaoping called "the most pressing mission, which must be carried out immediately and earnestly." The *Christian Science Monitor* reported, "The enthusiasm over high technology apparently stems from the decisive role of 'smart' weapons in the Gulf War."⁶³

As befits the PLA's infantry tradition, despite all the published analysis of naval and air forces, greatest attention was concentrated on ground, specifically, mechanized forces. Even before the land war began, PLA commentary said that mechanized forces would dominate in future ground warfare. As early as 1 February, *Liberation Army News* recommended a high priority for modernization of PLA mechanized forces. All PLA officers and soldiers had to be imbued with a "sense of mechanization."⁶⁴ Shortly after the war, *Liberation Army News* predicted that the proportion of mechanized forces in the PLA would continue to grow in preparation for future regional conflicts.⁶⁵ The prospective opponent of these mechanized forces was not stated, though China's geography leaves little doubt.

In March, "sense of mechanization" had already become a PLA buzzword. On 9 March, Chief of Staff Chi Haotian urged unit commanders to improve technical training so as to instill the "sense of mechanization" in soldiers and cadres. General

Chi informed an audience of armored corps officers that the PLA intended to build armored RRUs or "fist units" as key elements within all Combined Group Armies (CGAs).⁶⁶ It seems unlikely that General Chi believes all of the CGAs, particularly those stationed in mountains or on islands, will ever have "armored fist units." The rhetoric, however, suggests a change in PLA thinking about RRUs, which heretofore have been conceived primarily as light infantry and airmobile forces.

Also in March, Chi Haotian and Liu Huaqing observed a field exercise executed by a regiment of the Beijing Military Region which had been designated as a "pilot unit." It had received additional tanks and armored vehicles (it is unclear whether they were attached or assigned). During the exercise, the regiment carried out a "long counterattack" of a hundred kilometers in which it successfully demonstrated its mobility, secure communications, accurate firepower, and "excellent cohesion."⁶⁷

There is plenty of evidence that the PLA wants to take advantage of the current global "buyers market" in high technology weaponry to snap up a few bargains. The Air force has been in quest of state-of-the-art aircraft since the mid-1980s. When the Sino-American F-811 upgrade program fell through following the Tiananmen massacre, the PLAAF turned to the Soviet Union. The most widely noted negotiations with the Soviets have involved the prospective purchase of (depending upon which reports one believes) either the Su-24 Fencer, MiG-29 Fulcrum, Su-25 Frogfoot, or SU-27 Flanker.⁶⁸ The Russians put on a flight demonstration of nine different aircraft at a military air base near Beijing on 20-23 March presented by the First Deputy Minister of Aviation Industry.⁶⁹ In early April, the two sides reportedly "agreed" to a "deal" for the PRC to buy 24 Su-27s for a final cost of close to \$1 billion.⁷⁰ The PLA is also reportedly interested in buying a squadron of Mi-24 Hind attack helicopters from Mongolia.⁷¹ Currently, only two of the PLA's Group Armies are thought to have active helicopter squadrons-38th CGA with Gazelle helicopters and one other not further identified.⁷² While it is entirely possible that these or other purchases may be completed, I have seen too many such reports prove premature over the past 14 years to accept any deals as "done" at this writing.

A PLA Navy delegation is said to have visited the

Soviet aircraft carrier *Kuznetsov*, then undergoing sea trials.⁷³ The PLA Navy remains interested in aircraft carriers, which could play vital roles in the South China Sea.

Conclusions

1. The post-1986 doctrine of emphasizing "local and regional limited wars" has been strongly reinforced. This doctrine, which has been emphasized by those in the Academy of Military Sciences (AMS), the National Defense University, the middle ranks of the PLA, and increasingly among senior PLA commanders, is practicable. In the next few years it would be possible for the PLA to field a limited number of highly trained elite units with high technology equipment, much of which would have to be purchased abroad. That would provide a credible capability to conduct limited warfare along China's periphery.

2. The overall defense of China is more problematic. PRC defense strategy against invasion by a sophisticated enemy is still People's War Under Modern Conditions (PWUMC), which has been called into serious question by the Persian Gulf War. As emphasized above, Saddam Hussein, in effect, used an Iraqi variant of PWUMC, and it simply did not work.

Granted, Iraq is not China. Iraq is smaller. Its geography provides much less in the way of natural military barriers than China's. Iraq, as a somewhat more modernized urban society, is commensurately more vulnerable to air attack. On the other hand, Iraq had some major advantages that China is unlikely to enjoy in the near future. The literacy rate in Iraq is quite high, and the technical ability of the average soldier is considerably greater than it will be in the PLA for at least another decade. Iraq had some very modern high technology Soviet weapons systems, and supposedly had been trained in their use by Soviet advisors. Iraq possessed at least the hardware for a Soviet-style air defense system, complete with sophisticated electronic warfare devices. It had thousands of military aircraft, main battle tanks, armored fighting vehicles, and long-range artillery pieces that were vastly superior to anything the PLA has or can expect to have in this decade. Above all, its soldiers and airmen were the hardened recent veterans of a long brutal war. Despite these

advantages, the Iraqis not only were beaten, they were beaten very badly and very quickly.

The unknowable factors, of course, are human and political. Ultimately, the Gulf War was a rout because Iraqi soldiers lacked the leadership, discipline, and motivation to fight. All Chinese leaders probably believe (probably rightly) that PLA soldiers would fight tenaciously to defend China. But then everybody, including coalition commanders, quite reasonably expected the same of Iraqi soldiers.

Realistically, China is not threatened with a major invasion, so there is probably time to build a credible national defense. The Soviet threat is vastly less than it was only a few months ago; the United States, at least in the minds of *most* Chinese, is not about to invade; and nobody else is capable of doing so. If PRC leaders believed, or claimed to believe, that the United States or a coalition of major powers might invade China anytime soon, they would regard PWUMC strategy as dysfunctional and dangerous.

3. Those who claim to believe in immanent attack posit a different way to defend China. Some of the reactionary gerontocracy in Zhongnanhai are again speaking about the danger of American attack. They maintain that China cannot defend itself with regional and local warfare, nor with People's War Under Modern Conditions. Rather, they maintain that China must fall back to the classic Maoist People's War doctrine of "luring the enemy in deep" and destroying him with guerrilla warfare. That, of course, has far-reaching internal political implications which are familiar to any student of PLA history.

In March 1991, the National Defense Education movement was linked to People's Air Defense (what is called civil defense in the United States). People's Air Defense has not gotten much press in the past few years, since it is related to the doctrines of People's War Under Modern Conditions and Maoist People's War. As with many other aspects of the National Defense Education movement, the purpose seems to be to reenforce central control and national unity-strengthening ties between the PLA and local governments by resurrecting the possible threat of foreign attack.⁷⁴

In order to conduct Maoist People's War, it would be necessary to reassert the kinds of internal controls that existed during the Maoist period (1949-76).

That would mean party-directed mass mobilization of the population, a massive militia (numbering 100 million or more), and a massive PLA under the control of local party committees as well as its own internal political apparatus. To those among the "gang of elders" who advocate a return to neo-Maoist controls, a highly centralized economy, international isolation, and totalitarian politics, Maoist People's War is a marvelous vehicle. In the 1950s and 1960s, Mao largely justified "politics in command" and anti-foreignism ("self-sufficiency") as means of national strategic defense. Today, some Beijing hardliners appear to be advocating a return to Maoist People's War to justify a return to neo-Maoist totalitarianism.

4. In this continuing debate, it appears that military professionals, most of whom advocate local and limited war doctrine, have the upper hand. Their hand was strengthened, ironically, by the debt the hardliners incurred in Tiananmen Square. Rapid reaction units can be justified to the hard-line elders in terms of their internal policing utility (though an armored "fist unit" would be an exceedingly blunt riot control instrument). Partly for these reasons, we have witnessed the budget increases of 1990 and 1991.

5. In my view, while PLA leaders are vitally concerned with high technology weapons development, they have not gone completely overboard. In February, Shenyang MR Logistics Department Chief of Staff Shi Gengzong criticized those who demanded large immediate increases in the military budget because he believed the PLA was already receiving a large share of limited national resources. Shi urged the CMC to continue the policy of keeping the military budget low.⁷⁵ AMS researcher Liu Yichang wrote that China could not afford large increases in the defense budget, so the PLA should continue to "do more with less."⁷⁶ These soldiers were arguing that the economic priorities of the 1980s should continue and that agriculture, science and technology, and industry should continue to take precedence over military expenditures. In this, they are not necessarily backing the hardliners and their neo-Maoist argument for People's War.

Similarly, key military leaders continue to stress that, since personnel are a decisive factor in war, the

PLA should continue to accord top priority to personnel management, training, and education.⁷⁷ There have been continuing statements from notable professional leaders reminding the army that, as Mao constantly emphasized, people are more important than (or, in the new formulation, at least as important as) machines. Chief of Staff Chi Haotian told a meeting of the PLA General Headquarters to improve training and tactics while employing existing weapons to defeat superior enemy force.⁷⁸ General Logistics Department Director Zhao Nanqi told *Liberation Army News* that, while improving military science and technology was important, the key to victory is improved training and personnel management.⁷⁹ Some analysts have construed such statements to be a Maoist backlash or an attempt to downplay the importance of technology.⁸⁰ Rather, some professional officers just recognize that China's economic and technological situation was not significantly changed by the Gulf War. The PLA cannot become a state-of-the-art armed force in the immediate future. Therefore, they must concentrate on those aspects of military modernization that are relatively inexpensive: doctrine, personnel management, training, education.

6. Whether or not they emphasize increasing the budget, most professionals agree on reducing the size of the PLA. This cuts to the heart of the political debate with the hardline People's War advocates, for the latter believe China must be defended by a mass army backed by a mobilized population.

Those who advocate drastic troop reductions can point to the Gulf War. The decisive military forces were those of the United States, Great Britain, and France: relatively small, mostly volunteers, and highly professionalized. The superiority of such forces in an age of high technology "three-dimensional warfare" is hard to deny. Even in the Soviet Union, drastic troop reductions and increased professionalism are under serious consideration by Air Marshal Shaposhnikov and the other military reformers.⁸¹

Speaking at the 863 Program Conference in April 1991, Chi Haotian emphasized the need to arrive through research at an "optimum combination of men and weapons." He suggested that the resulting modernized PLA might be considerably smaller

than the current one. A *Liberation Army News* author recommended that if the leadership wishes to arm the PLA with expensive high technology weapons, then the number of units will have to be commensurately reduced. Correspondingly, if the PLA is expanded, the quality of its forces will be drawn down.⁸²

7. The current debate over "men versus weapons" is more than a debate over military strategy. It is about the future of Chinese society. To the extent that we see statements about an imminent American military threat, the superiority of men over weapons, People's War and People's Air Defense, we will be witnessing the continued influence of hard-line internal politics.

8. *Liberation Army News*, published by the General Political Department, seems to have consistently sided with the professionals who emphasize that talented, educated, well-led and well-trained soldiers form a unity with high technology weapons. Raising technology to the same level as human factors implicitly backs those who argue for the drastically changed character of modern warfare. They contend that in the "electronic revolution" and the "new age of information," strategies, tactics, and many other aspects of the military art must change. *Liberation Army News* suggested that, while superior strategy has always been the key to winning a war, the application of high technology weapons has become crucial to shaping correct strategy. The relationship of high technology to strategy, it said, is a special manifestation of the contradiction between weapons and people.⁸³

9. The series of conferences during early 1991 were sponsored by military professionals with the full personal support of Deng Xiaoping and at least some of the other elders, in opposition to more hardline elders. The first CMC meeting in January apparently directed all appropriate organs to study the Gulf War and come up with recommendations for modernizing the PLA. The professionals came to the February meeting with various plans for a modernization drive. No later than that meeting, the decision was finally made for the 13 percent increase in the defense budget. In the March CMC meeting, those funds were allocated

and initial directives were issued. The March and April S&T meetings brought key industrial authorities in, and priorities were hammered out in terms of programs and responsibilities. The priorities seem to be mainly in electronic warfare, night vision and surveillance, guided missiles, and mechanized forces. Deng clearly supports the PLA in this new attempt at modernizing some of its forces.

Endnotes

The opinions or assertions contained herein are those of the author and are not to be construed as official or reflecting the views of the University of California or of any other state or federal government agency.

¹Ellis Joffe, *China After the Gulf War*, SCPS Paper, Kaohsiung Taiwan, ROC: Sun Yat-sen Center for Policy Studies, National Sun Yat-sen University, May 1991.

²Joffe, 5.

³Joffe, 4-5.

⁴Harlan W. Jencks, "People's War Under Modern Conditions: Wishful Thinking, National Suicide, or Effective Deterrent?" *China Quarterly*, no. 98 (June 1984), 305-310.

⁵*Jiefangjun Bao* (Liberation Army), *JFJB*, 4 January 1991 and 11 January 1991, cited in "Impact of Persian Gulf War on PRC Defense Strategy," *Journal of HK*, IIR 6 842 0421 91/(SEROLD), 28 June 1991, 0004.

⁶Gao Runqiang, "Effects of High-Tech Weapons on Local Wars," *JFJB*, 23 January 1987, 3.

⁷Tai Ming Cheung, "Political Payoff," *Far Eastern Economic Review* [FEER], 5 April 1990, 23-29. Cheung notes that "Western intelligence agencies estimate that the Chinese defense budget based on Nato [sic] accounting methods would be 100 to 150 percent above the official Chinese figure." See also *Ming Pao Yue Kan* [Ming Pao Monthly], no. 286 (October 1989), 3-15, translation, in JPRS-CAR-90-005 (22 January 1990), 1-17; and *Wen Wei Po* (Hong Kong), 22 March 1990, 2.

⁸During the 1980s, there were slight increases in *renminbi* amounts, but inflation caused an effective annual reduction of about seven percent in the military budget. From 1980 to 1989, it dropped from 15 percent of GNP to less than six percent. The defense budget was RMB 20.96 billion in 1987 and RMB 21.53 billion in 1988. *Military Balance* 1988-89, 147; *Jane's Defence Weekly* [JDW], 30 April 1988, 819; and *Xinhua*, 26 June 1988, translation, in FBIS-CHI, 88-123, 32-33.

⁹JDW, 28 January 1989, 187; and *China Daily*, 27 June 1988, 3, in FBIS-CHI, 88-124, 23.

¹⁰Li Fengho and Li Wenhua, "Reinterpretation of the Army's Status and Function in a Period of Peace," *JFJB*, 14 July 1989, 3.

¹¹The most obvious exception was Major General Zhang Gong, the new commissar of the Beijing MR, who "sky-rocketed" past dozens of senior officers. In his previous post, as deputy director of the MR political department, Zhang was the principle spokesman to the foreign press following the Tiananmen massacre.

¹²Li Lun, "Attach importance to ... Logistics Management," *JFJB*, 2 November 1990, 3, translation, in FBIS-CHI-90-230, 35-36; and *Xinhua*, 11 December 1990, translation, in

FBIS-CHI-90-240, 36-37.

¹³"China Establishes Degrees in Military Science," *Zhongguo Tongxun She* (Hong Kong), 12 December 1990, translation, in FBIS-CHI-90-240, 37.

¹⁴Hu Changfa, "Uphold Correct Thinking on Running Schools, Train High-Quality Qualified Personnel for Army Building," *JFJB*, 23 January 1991, 3, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-031, 30-33. Emphasis added.

¹⁵*JFJB*, 1 June 1990; also see the article by Academy of Military Sciences researcher Guo Anhu in *JFJB*, 16 November 1990.

¹⁶Shen Shungen, "The Mysterious Naval Special Forces Zhongdui: A Visit to the East Sea Fleet's Amphibious Reconnaissance Zhongdui," *Jianchuan Zhishi*, no. 5 (8 May 1990), 2-4, and no. 6 (8 June 1990) 2-3, 22, translations, in FBIS-CHI-91-075, 84-89.

¹⁷Zhang Zhimeng, and others, "Sharp Sword for Peace," *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*, 9 and 10 August 1990, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-073, 58-61. Also see Zhang Zhimeng, "A Certain Rapid Reaction Force in Guangzhou," *JFJB*, 29 July 1991, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-073, 57-58.

¹⁸For an excellent analysis of the politics of China's UN votes, see Ellis Joffe, 1-3.

¹⁹*JFJB*, 27 August 1990; and *JFJB*, 17 December 1990.

²⁰*JFJB*, 27 August 1990.

²¹*Shijie Zhishi* [World Knowledge], 16 December 1990.

²²*FEER*, 31 January 1991, 6.

²³*JFJB*, 16 December 1990, and 16 January 1991.

²⁴*JFJB*, 18 January 1991.

²⁵Matt Peters, "A man for all season," *FEER*, 20 June 1991, 72.

²⁶*The Mirror*, 22 January 1991.

²⁷Quoted in *Hong Kong Standard*, 15 March 1991, 6, in FBIS-CHI-91-051, 5.

²⁸*JFJB*, 14 December 1990.

²⁹Guangzhou Guangdong Prov. Svc., 7 December 1990, translation, in FBIS-CHI-90-239, 31; Li Yongchao and Hong Heping, "The Air Force Conducts Confrontational Exercises on a Campaign Scale," *JFJB*, 18 January 1991, 1, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-026, 28-29; Willy Wo-lap Lam, *South China Morning Post*, 6 February 1991, in FBIS-CHI-91-026, 28 Liu Xinying and Gao Aisu, "Liu Huaqing, Chi Haotian Watch Full-Scale Exercises by Mechanized Infantry Regiment," *JFJB*, 9 March 1991, 1, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-055, 25-26; Guo Xiangxing and Zhu Bin, "First Generation Ship-Based Pilots ... Modernization of National Defense," *Renmin Ribao* [People's Daily, *RMRB*] Overseas Edition, 6 February 1991, 4, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-031, 28-29; and Lhasa Tibet TV, 2 March 1991, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-043, 35.

³⁰"The Entire Armed Forces Are Launching an Upsurge of Military Training," *RMRB*, 19 March 1991, 3, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-055, 25.

³¹*JFJB*, 25 January 1991.

³²*JFJB*, 25 January 1991.

³³*JFJB*, 25 January 1991; *Wen Wei Po*, 31 January 1991; and *Ta Kung Pao*, 31 January 1991.

³⁴*Liaowang* 4 and 11 February 1991. Also see *Shijie Junshi* (World Military Affairs), no. 2 (February 1991) 18-19.

³⁵(1) Support the Army and give preferential treatment to families of revolutionary soldiers and martyrs; and (2) support the government and cherish the people. *JFJB*, 11 January 1991, 1, and *Xinhua*, 11 February 1991, translations, in FBIS-CHI-91-031, 29-30; *Xinhua*, 14 March 1991, translation, in

FBIS-CHI-91-055, 28-31.

³⁶Changsha Hunan Prov. Svc., 6 March 1991, and Hohhot Inner Mongolia Regional Svc., 15 March 1991, translations, in FBIS-CHI-91-054, 33-34; and Hohhot Inner Mongolia Regional Svc., 13 March 1991, translations, in FBIS-CHI-91-058, 29-30.

³⁷This is implied in *JFJB*, 30 January 1991, 3, in FBIS-CHI-91-043, 35-37.

³⁸*Ta Kung Pao*, 6 February 1991.

³⁹*Wen Wei Po*, 20 February 1991.

⁴⁰*Tokyo Shimbun*, 29 January 1991, 5.

⁴¹Luo Ping, "The Gulf War Is Strongly Pounding the CPC," *Cheng Ming [Contending]* (Hong Kong), no. 161 (1 March 1991), 6-10, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-043, 7.

⁴²*Jiefangjun Huabao [PLA Pictorial]*, (3/91), 42-43.

⁴³*Xiandai Junshi [Contemporary Military]*, nos. 166-172 (November 1990-July 1991) *passim*. Any doubt about COSTIND's relationship to *Conmilit* was removed by the congratulatory messages to the magazine marking its fifteenth anniversary in January 1991. See *XDJS*, no. 170 (March 1990), 4-9.

⁴⁴*Cheng Ming*, 1 March 1991; and *South China Morning Post*, 7 March 1991.

⁴⁵*Ching Pao* (Hong Kong), 10 February 1991.

⁴⁶Chen Bingfu, edited by Zhan Shaohong (both of the PLA Navy Service College), "An Economic Analysis of the Changes in China's Military Expenditure in the Last Ten Years," *Jingji Yangjiu [Economics Studies]*, no. 6 (20 June 1990), 77-81, translation, in FBIS-CHI-90-151, 30-35. The long quotation is on page 33.

⁴⁷Vice Minister of Civil Affairs Fan Baojun corroborated this point in his "Continue to Do a Good Job in Giving Special Care to Disabled Servicemen and Family Members," *RMRB*, 29 July 1990, 4, translation, in FBIS-CHI-90-153, 36-38.

⁴⁸Hu Nianqiu, *Xinhua*, 16 March 1991, and Li Hong, *China Daily*, translations, in FBIS-CHI-91-054, 27-28. There seems to be a real possibility of a further cut in PLA manpower. Reportedly, some 32,000 PLA and PAP officers and 16,000 dependents are to be demobilized in 1991. However, the widely noted demobilization of one million men, which supposedly was accomplished between June 1985 and April 1987, is not yet really finished. The problem was, and still is, that the burden for resettling demobilized soldiers is laid upon local governments which have simply not done the job. Hence, a State Circular has described officer demobilization as "an important political task."

⁴⁹Wang Luye, "Military-Civilian Integration Is a Major Development of Defense Economics," *JFJB*, 30 January 1991, 3, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-037, 34-35.

⁵⁰Luo Xiaobing, "Strengthening National Defense Building Is Important Guarantee for Economic Development," *JFJB*, 6 February 1991, 3, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-041, 33-35.

⁵¹*Zhongguo Kungjun [Chinese Air Force Magazine]*, February 1991.

⁵²*Jingbao*, 10 April 1991.

⁵³Willy Wo-lap Lam, *South China Morning Post*, 7 March 1991, 1, in FBIS-CHI-91-046, 23-24; and Chen Wei-chun, "Army Generals Request Big Increase of Military Expenditure," *Kuang Chiao Ching*, no. 221, (16 February 1991), 11-12, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-032, 21-23.

⁵⁴*South China Morning Post*, 25 March 1991, 1 and 11, in FBIS-CHI-91-058, 14.

⁵⁵*Hong Kong Standard*, 16 April 1991; Beijing Radio, 16 April 1991.

⁵⁶*JFJB*, 28 March 1991.

⁵⁷*JFJB*, 1 March 1991, 3, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-05431-33; 30-31; *Xinhua*, 1 March 1991, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-041, 13; Luo Ping "The Gulf War Is Strongly Pounding the CPC," *Cheng Ming [Contending]* (Hong Kong), no. 161 (1 March 1991), 6-10, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-043, 7, 2-7.

⁵⁸The "863 program" was launched in 1986 to sponsor high technology and optimize the efforts of China's scientists and technicians, who previously had been neglected and misused.

⁵⁹*Renmin Ribao*, 24 May 1991.

⁶⁰*JFJB*, 20 March 1991, 1, quoted in *Zhongguo Tongxun She*, 20 March 1991, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-055, 32.

⁶¹*JFJB*, 22 March and *JFJB*, 22 February.

⁶²*South China Morning Post*, 16 April 1991.

⁶³James L. Tyson, "Workers of World, Compute: China Revamps Industry," *CSM*, 16 July 1991, 4; and Wang Dongtai, in *China Daily*, 15 July 1991, 2. See also excerpts of speeches at the "Seminar on Strategy for Developing China's New High-Tech Industrial Development Zones," in "Develop High-Science and Technology, Apply them to Industry," *RMRB*, 3 June 1991, 5, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-137, 37-43.

⁶⁴*JFJB*, 1 February 1991.

⁶⁵*JFJB*, 15 March 1991.

⁶⁶*JFJB*, 28 April 1991.

⁶⁷*JFJB*, 9 March 1991.

⁶⁸The author has addressed this issue in detail in Harlan W. Jencks, *Some Political and Military Implications of Soviet Warplane Sales to the PRC*, SCPS Paper, Kaohsiung Taiwan, ROC: Sun Yat-sen Center for Policy Studies, National Sun Yat-sen University, 1991.

⁶⁹Wang Ge, "Soviet Airplanes to make Flight Exhibition in China," *RMRB Overseas Edition*, 15 March 1991, 4, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-051, 11; and *Xinhua*, 20 March 1991, translation, in FBIS-CHI-91-054, 8.

⁷⁰Tai Ming Cheung, "More Punch for PLA," *FEER*, 11 April 1991, 18.

⁷¹*FEER*, 18 April 1991, 11.

⁷²*FEER*, 11 October 1990.

⁷³*FEER*, 2 May 1991. The *Kuznetsov* has a ski-jump launch system and may carry two squadrons of fighters (probably Su-27s) and one squadron of fighter-bombers. *JDW*, 29 March 1989, 524; *JDW*, 8 December 1990, 1150 reported that the carrier initially called *Tbilisi* was to be renamed *Admiral of the Fleet N.G. Kuznetsov*.

⁷⁴Changsha Hunan Prov. Svc., 6 March 1991, and Hohhot Inner Mongolia Regional Svc., 15 March 1991, translations, in FBIS-CHI-91-054, 33-34; and Hohhot Inner Mongolia Regional Svc., 13 March 1991, translations, in FBIS-CHI-91-058, 29-30.

⁷⁵*JFJB*, 20 February 1991.

⁷⁶*JFJB*, 6 February 1991.

⁷⁷See the statement by Jiang Zemin in *JFJB*, 21 March 1991.

⁷⁸*JFJB*, 9 April 1991.

⁷⁹*JFJB*, 2 April 1991.

⁸⁰The SEROLD analysts appear to take this view in "Impact of Persian Gulf War on PRC Defense Strategy," USDLO HK, IIR 6 842 0421 91/(SEROLD), 28 June 1991, 0015.

⁸¹Daniel Sneider, *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 August 1991, 4.

⁸²"Interaction Between Quantity and Quality in the PLA," *JFJB*, 26 April 1991.

⁸³*JFJB*, 19 April 1991.

The Role of the Chinese Military in the Succession Struggle: Observations and Speculations

Michael Swaine

Introduction

Any attempt to assess the possible political role of China's military in the leadership transition to the post-Deng era confronts enormous difficulties. While foreign analysts of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) have become relatively skilled at identifying and describing major trends in such areas as military strategy and doctrine, combat capabilities, training and officer development, and the changing balance between professionalism and politicization, far less success has been achieved in delineating those features of the Chinese system relevant to military involvement in internal leadership upheavals, despite some valiant efforts.

Little is known, for example, concerning the basic beliefs and personal and institutional loyalties of the vast majority of China's officer corps. There is little agreement on the relative importance of possible lines of division within the PLA leadership that may influence such attitudes (vertical distinctions between commanders, commissars and S&T types; unit loyalties based on earlier Field Army ties and subsequent related GA affiliations; horizontal differences linked to leadership generations; divisions associated with institutional tiers within the chain of command). Also, we do not know the extent to which both central and regional PLA leaders communicate among themselves, formally and informally, nor the actual level of dissatisfaction and even outright opposition to the current post-Tiananmen leadership that exists throughout the PLA.

Given such difficulties, it is no surprise that major disagreement remains over the most basic questions

involving the PLA's likely involvement in a future succession struggle: (a) whether the military can resist being drawn fully into an escalating elite struggle; and (b) if involved, whether it will be a force for stability or a catalyst for greater chaos.

This short paper cannot resolve this ongoing debate. Rather, it merely attempts to: (1) examine five key components of China's politico-military system that will likely most influence the political role of the PLA under conditions of intensified elite conflict; and (2) offer some speculations as to what these resulting characteristics of the politico-military system say about the type of military involvement most likely to occur in a future succession struggle.

Much of what follows will undoubtedly be open to differing interpretations, particularly regarding issues of current leadership relations and the legacy of past cases of political involvement in elite struggles. Conclusions speculate on the relative probability of five alternative types of military involvement and will perhaps prompt some criticism. If so, then this paper will have served its purpose, which is to generate discussion and debate, not present a finished piece of scholarship.

Components of Party-Army Relations: Observations

There are at least five basic components of China's political-military system of greatest relevancy to PLA involvement in a future succession struggle. This section will define each component and then present some rather subjective observations on the nature of each.

1. The Role of the Elders. This includes the level and type of influence upon the party and military

leadership of the revolutionary elders and the general question of personal versus institutional authority in China. Of particular importance is the overall role elders have played in past cases of military involvement in elite strife and the personal relationship between specific elders and top party and military leaders today.

The historical record suggests that the senior leaders of the Chinese revolution have exerted an enormous influence over all aspects of military involvement in elite political struggles. Possessing great prestige and close, personal links to leaders throughout the party and military structures, such individuals have demonstrated an ability to initiate, shape, and constrain the nature of PLA political participation, albeit imperfectly. Indeed, the type of influence they exert has often provided some coherence and unity to military participation in elite struggles, while also serving personal political motives.

For example, the PLA as an institution only entered the intense internecine political struggles of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) in response to the orders of Mao Zedong, ostensibly to serve his parochial political interests and to prevent the spread of social anarchy. Moreover, the subsequent confused, often conflictual pattern of PLA participation in the GPCR during much of 1967-8 was at least partly linked to the contradictory orders issued by Mao and the Cultural Revolution Group to both support the "genuine" Left and maintain order. Indeed, local military leaders were often forced to shift back and forth between repression and restraint in response to alternating signals from Beijing. Finally, the PLA was ultimately given the opportunity to restore order and replace the party leadership by Mao's reluctant decision to bring the Red Guard rampages to a halt and begin the formation of revolutionary committees, apparently made only after some strong urgings by moderate party and military leaders. In short, despite enormous social and political upheaval, ultimate authority was maintained by Mao Zedong, whose actions and words provided the general framework for PLA actions.

The role of Deng Xiaoping and his elder colleagues was of equally crucial importance to PLA involvement during the Tiananmen crisis. The authority and personal prestige of Deng and Yang Shangkun proved decisive during the initial phase

of military intervention, overcoming apparent signs of hesitation among both central and local military leaders. Indeed, regularized lines of control over the PLA during Tiananmen apparently gave way to the authority of the elders. As a result, the PLA essentially served as an instrument of repression for these senior leaders and their younger supporters within the party and army, to the apparent anger and frustration of other members of both institutions. Moreover, by involving the personal authority of the gerontocracy rather than relying on formal, institutional procedures strengthened under the reforms, the Tiananmen crisis doubtless served to accentuate the general importance of informal patron-client associations within the PLA.

Even during those more common cases of less widespread PLA involvement in elite political struggles, elder party leaders, in collaboration with their military colleagues, often provided the impetus of PLA intervention. It was Mao Zedong who provided the opportunity for Lin Biao and the propaganda arm of the PLA to enter the emerging elite struggle of 1963-4 with the "Learn From the PLA" campaign. During the transition to the post-Mao era, it was Deng Xiaoping who allied with Ye Jianying to ensure military support for the removal of Hua Guofeng.

The key role played by senior leaders in initiating and shaping the context of PLA involvement in the past suggests that the absence of such leaders in a future succession struggle will have a profound effect on the character of possible PLA involvement. In a very fundamental sense, they provided the "glue" that kept the PLA together under the intense pressures of social unrest and struggles occurring among more junior members of the elite. Indeed, in a future situation where the leadership of the party may not consist of individuals with strong personal authority and a wide range of contacts with the PLA leadership, it will become vitally important for civilian party leaders to either: (a) reach an agreed upon consensus on a successor leadership; or (b) observe formal lines of institutional authority in conflict resolution and leadership selection.

Knowledge is particularly limited on relationships between specific elder leaders and formal members of the leadership today, as well as the likely attitude of individual elders toward specific military heads. All the remaining members of the gerontocracy are doubtless dedicated to preserving order, stability

and the dominance of the party at all costs. This was shown by Tiananmen. Yet there are also clearly fundamental differences among specific elders over policy issues which relate directly to differences among the formal successor leadership, and perhaps to differing attitudes within the PLA. The most notable is, of course, the contrast between Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun over economic policy and the related struggle between Jiang Zemin and Li Peng. This could be linked to differences within the military between more professional commanders and political commissars associated with Yang Baibing. Reports have appeared in the Hong Kong press that Jiang Zemin has made concerted efforts to court more moderate professional commanders such as Liu Huaqing and Qin Jiwei, as well as senior retired PLA leaders. On the other side, little is known about the relationship between Li Peng, Chen Yun and Yang Baibing, which could prove to be very important in a future succession struggle.

There are considerable ambiguities in the positions of both Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkun with regard to the military. Deng obviously supports firm party control over the PLA. He is reported to have very good relations with Yang Baibing and has indeed supported Yang's efforts at repoliticization of the PLA (below). At the same time, Deng also retains strong convictions about the necessity of China's modernization and the need to maintain an emphasis on practical development issues over ideological debate. This has increasingly prompted him to demand an end to political infighting with the PLA leadership and a greater emphasis on development issues, including a greater stress on military training and science and technology. Such actions could serve to erode the influence of political types and establish the basis for greater consensus and a dominant position within the PLA for moderate professional commanders. Yet Deng may also see such a development as providing an opportunity for a weakening of party control over the military, which would be a particularly dangerous development, given current circumstances. In short, he faces something of a dilemma in dealing with the PLA.

Yang Shangkun's problem is largely a function of his relationship with Yang Baibing. As half-brothers, the two men are obviously very close. Yet, prior to Tiananmen, the elder Yang was strongly identified with military reform, including

the reduction of the role of politics and ideology within the PLA forces. He is now more closely linked to the polemical policy line of the younger Yang which is by all accounts highly unpopular with professional military leaders. In a post-Deng setting, Yang Shangkun could seek to improve his political standing with these leaders by again stressing professionalism and even, perhaps, a departure from some of the broader political themes emphasized since Tiananmen. But what then could he do with Yang Baibing?

Given such problems and differences among the elders, the order of their death could have a significant impact in shaping the issues, political positions, and personal relationships of members of the successor leadership, including their individual relations with various members of the military elite. Yet, perhaps of greater importance is the fact that, regardless of the precise order of death, the broad personal prestige of whatever elder remains at the end will almost certainly be used to support one or more weak leaders, to the exclusion of others. Unless the top leadership of the military extend their support to such successors, the situation will virtually ensure the emergence of a vicious leadership struggle, perhaps involving the military (see the conclusion).

2. Party/Military Elite Relations. This includes the relationship between the uppermost professional leadership of the PLA and the formal leadership directing the military through the Party Central Military Commission (CMC) and the Politburo. Included in this area are PLA leadership perceptions of the overall capability, in addition to authority of top civilian party leaders (especially the General Secretary of the CCP/Chairman of the CMC and the Premier of the State Council), the general political and personal relationships among leading party and military members of the CMC, Politburo and Central Committee, and their relations with the professional military leadership outside the party structure.

Tiananmen precipitated the final collapse of the post-Mao top leadership structure that had provided a certain level of regime stability during much of the reform period but had been increasingly challenged since the ouster of Hu Yaobang in 1987. That structure was composed of two major groups of leaders: reformers who were more attentive to

practical economic issues and government matters than to questions of ideology and party control, and more orthodox, anti-Mao planners who valued economic control and political order over experimentation linked to political and social change.

These leadership arrangements unambiguously collapsed when the core of the reformers, led by General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, was removed from power during the Tiananmen crisis. This event also marked the collapse of Deng's carefully prepared succession arrangements. In two and a half years, both of Deng's designated successors (Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang) were gone. Equally important, his long-term strategy of easing his senior colleagues from power has also suffered major and perhaps irreparable damage.

The new elite structure that has emerged since Tiananmen purports to be a unified, collective group under General Secretary Jiang Zemin, but is actually highly unstable, constituting a transitional regime at best. It consists of a mixture of two generations of leaders formed into three loose groupings. One group is associated with Premier Li Peng and fellow Standing Committee members Yao Yilin and Song Ping and is backed principally by key elder conservatives such as Chen Yun. A second group is led by Yang Shangkun and his younger half-brother Yang Baibing. A third group is identified with Jiang Zemin and fellow Politburo Standing Committee member Li Ruihuan.

These three groups are collectively seeking to defend and consolidate the authority of the communist regime in the unstable post-Tiananmen environment, while at the same time striving to enhance their relative factional strength in the competition for power that will ensue following Deng Xiaoping's death. They seem agreed only on the absolute necessity of the CCP averting another leadership crisis similar to Tiananmen.

What most distinguishes this unstable leadership structure from past leadership groupings, and of greatest significance to the possible future role of the military in a succession struggle, is the fact that no single contender for power possesses the political strength, administrative capabilities, vision, and broad prestige to lead a credible, enduring successor regime in China. Those presently vested with formal decisionmaking authority derive their position largely from their sponsorship by various party

elders, not on the basis of power or status that any of them possess independently. Perhaps most important, there is also little evidence that any individuals within the "inner circle" of leaders are strongly supported by the military, although such support will be vital to the prospects for any post-Deng regime.

In particular, although Deng Xiaoping relinquished his long-held post as Chairman of the CMC to Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin as part of his attempt to strengthen Jiang's position as the "core" of the successor leadership, the latter has few ties to the military.¹ Thus, as with Hua Guofeng before him, the formal leader of the party and the military today does not have the personal experience, prestige, and general breadth of *guanxi* contacts of other key members of the political leadership. The contrast between Jiang's position and that of Yang Shangkun and his younger half-brother, General Yang Baibing, Director of the PLA GPD and Secretary-General of the CMC is particularly glaring.

Although the elder Yang has held a position of great influence within the party elite since early in the reform period, both men significantly improved their positions within the PLA after Tiananmen. Since late 1989, the two Yangs and their supporters have sought to turn their political gains into a decisive advantage over Jiang and other erstwhile contenders for party leadership, such as Li Ruihuan. For example, through his control over the PLA's political apparatus, Yang Baibing in particular has sought to use the politicization campaign to defend the PLA's role in Tiananmen and to raise the importance of the political system within the military, while attacking aspects of military reform which strengthen the position of professionals. The *Liberation Army Daily* under Yang's GPD has been the source of the most strident, vitriolic rhetoric emerging since Tiananmen concerning the dangers to the military posed by the forces of "bourgeois liberalization" and "peaceful evolution."

Yang Baibing's influence within the PLA may also have increased as a result of post-Tiananmen organizational changes in the system of discipline inspection within the military, intended to strengthen party control. Beginning in mid-1990, a newly formed Discipline Inspection Department (DID) within Yang's GPD took over responsibility for most of the daily work previously performed by

the Discipline Inspection Committee (DIC) of the CMC. Essentially eclipsing the latter body in importance, such a move places formal control over the supervision and inspection of the loyalty and political "purity" of personnel throughout the leading bodies of the PLA in the hands of Yang Baibing. It is interesting to note that the absorption by the GPD of all discipline inspection work occurred after the completion of leadership reshuffles at the regional level, which apparently involved extensive personnel changes throughout the PLA political control apparatus (below). Such changes may have resulted in the replacement of "professionalized" commissars who attained their posts during the reforms with more "politicized" supporters of Yang Baibing, perhaps as a necessary prelude to the consolidation of Yang's political control over the PLA.

Indeed, the Yangs may have used the personnel reshuffles of spring-summer 1990 and the restructuring of the PAP to strengthen their positions throughout the military, installing officers loyal to them in vital command slots. Of particular significance is the fact that individuals considered Yang supporters were put in top posts within both the Beijing MR and the PAP. The Beijing MR is the most important and powerful of the seven MRs, containing six of 24 GAs and responsibility for defense of the capital and three surrounding provinces. It also controls the Beijing Garrison Command. The PAP is responsible for security within Beijing and other cities. The positioning of supporters in such crucial posts could prove very significant in the event of a future succession struggle or other political crisis at the center.

It is important to note, however, that data on the relationship between post-Tiananmen changes in PLA personnel and the political positions of individual leaders is highly inconclusive. One should not assume that the reshuffles entirely served the political interests of the Yangs. The fact that Yang Baibing played a major role in their preparation and implementation (see below) is not surprising, considering the general influence of the PLA GPD over personnel decisions and the relative inexperience of Jiang Zemin over military matters. Moreover, there is no credible evidence to indicate that the Yangs actually determined who would be sent where, and we simply do not know enough about the personal affiliations of most military

leaders in the provinces to determine with confidence their relationship to the Yangs or any other central leaders. It is also important to remember that Deng Xiaoping almost certainly endorsed the personnel shifts and would not have supported moves intended to undermine Jiang (more on the reshuffles below).

It is very difficult to identify which senior military leaders might be opposed to the machinations of the Yangs. In general, there is little doubt that many professional officers dislike them for their attempt to reinject politics into the military. On a more personal level, Yang Shangkun is reportedly regarded by many military and party leaders as highly devious and untrustworthy. Similarly, Yang Baibing is also disliked by many as a political work cadre "ignorant of military building" and as a political opportunist raised to high office by the elder Yang after a relatively undistinguished career in the PLA political apparatus.

Some observers believe that Liu Huaqing (former naval commander, overseer of military R&D, and currently a Vice Chairman of the CMC) and Qin Jiwei (Minister of Defense and CMC member), both close associates of Deng Xiaoping, are among those military leaders most uncomfortable with Tiananmen and opposed to the Yangs and their policies. Qin may have supported the leadership of the Beijing MR in its apparent resistance to the crackdown. He may also have opposed Yang Shangkun over personnel shifts within the CMC after the events of June 1989. Liu Huaqing's close association with military modernization suggests that he is probably highly unsympathetic to post-Tiananmen military trends. Various public remarks he has made since Tiananmen contrast with the polemical tone of speeches given by the Yangs, stressing instead the need for regular military training while downplaying the GPD's emphasis on political education. Chi Haotian, Director of the PLA General Staff Department and CMC member, has also taken a similar stance in various speeches.

In addition to Qin, Liu, and Chi, several senior retired PLA generals might be acutely dissatisfied with the changes in military policy since Tiananmen, although their political role is likely constrained by physical infirmities. These include former Defense Minister Zhang Aiping and retired Chief of Staff Yang Dezhi, both of whom reportedly signed a letter calling on the PLA not to shoot

civilians during the Tiananmen Incident. There are also Hong Kong reports that some veteran generals and PLA cadres have expressed their resentment directly to Deng Ziaoping of the Yang's attempt to increase their influence over the military since Tiananmen.

Despite such formidable opposition, however, the Yangs have managed to maintain control over most discussion of PLA policy in the public media after Tiananmen and thus have presented at least the impression of being in the dominant position within the PLA leadership. Indeed, the PLA politicization campaign was pushed with a vengeance in late 1989 and early to mid-1990. This was probably made possible because of the leadership's general agreement, at that time, on the need to stress ideology and party control, as well as Jiang's relative weakness and inexperience as head of the CMC.

However, it appears that the power balance within the PLA has begun to shift against the Yangs in recent months, for several reasons. Since mid-1990, Jiang Zemin may have strengthened his position within the military (as suggested above), apparently developing ties with some of the senior commanders and veteran cadres and generally portraying himself as supportive of professional military interests. As Jiang has gained greater confidence in speaking out on military matters, he has shown increasing signs of challenging the line taken by Yang Baibing.

Secondly, the challenge to Yang Baibing's politicization campaign was given considerable impetus by the impact of the Gulf Crisis on China's leadership. The rapid military response of the US-led forces in deploying large numbers of troops and equipment to the Middle East and the clear superiority of the coalition's weaponry over Soviet and Chinese equipment in the subsequent conflict with Iraq greatly alarmed many PLA officers and party leaders. The conflict confirmed both the value of advanced technology on the modern battlefield and the obsolescence of Mao's People's War concept, and thus enabled military professionals to push forward their arguments for devoting greater attention to "purely military functions," for both deterrence and prestige reasons. In early 1991, the CMC issued a circular calling on all military units to improve their professional and combat skills, stating that the basic requirement of military work was combat power. The circular did not mention

ideological study.

The Gulf Crisis also provided further impetus to ongoing pressures, evident since at least Tiananmen, for an increase in defense allocations on a consistent, long-term basis. The CMC has also reportedly decided to carry out a second series of reductions in the size of the army, to follow the initial cuts of the late eighties. Perhaps amounting to a 500,000 man decrease over five years, the move is intended to allow the military to devote even greater funds to equipment and more sophisticated weaponry. While the ground forces are to become smaller, quicker, more efficient and capable of night combat operations, the air force and navy are to significantly upgrade their overall technological level and acquire a variety of more sophisticated weapons systems, through both internal improvements and foreign purchases.

As a result of the above changes, the position of the PLA moderates and their supporters within the party has improved significantly in recent months. Yet the military media under Yang Baibing continues to stress the themes of the politicization campaign. In short, the factional struggle within the military has reached a stalemate.

3. Party/Military Institutional Relations. This includes the formal and informal structures of command and control over China's military forces, as well as the features of the party's general indoctrination and control structure evident throughout the military apparatus. An understanding of these control networks is crucial to any assessment of the potential for military forces to be used by individual party leaders or groups of party leaders during a succession struggle.

Detailed, reliable information on this component influencing military involvement in politics is extremely scarce. Knowledge of the formal command and control structure within the PLA and between the PLA and the CMC and the regulations describing its use under various conditions derive largely from highly subjective sources (such as accounts of individual officers) or single cases of military action. We know that the system is highly centralized. In general, military combat units in China cannot be moved (even within MRs, much less between them) without the formal authorization of the Headquarters of the General Staff, which has operational control over Group Armies (GAs). The

General Staff, in turn, cannot issue orders to move GAs without the formal authorization of the CMC. It is not known, however, what precise form orders to move troops must take: for example, how many signatures are required and whether or not verbal orders are accepted under specific conditions. It is also not known what units or individuals must be informed of an order to move troops, other than the commanders in the field, nor what type of decision is needed to issue an order from within the CMC (initiative of the chairman? vote of the executive committee?).

Such questions are probably not extremely important if a senior elder or group of elders issues an order. Under such conditions, it would almost certainly be accepted even if technically "illegal," as was most likely the case during Tiananmen. But the lack of clear, institutionalized procedures could become crucial in a future political crisis if elders were to violently disagree over the use of troops, or, more likely, if an order was sent by a non-elder against the wishes of elders or of other lesser leaders. When there is considerable ambiguity in the command system, different contending factional leaders could all issue plausibly "acceptable" orders.

Under such conditions, as long as military leaders had no strong, personal ties with one or another of the contending factions, the logical tendency would be for them to behave strictly in accordance with formal regulations and obey the Chairman of the CMC. But, if an individual leader with strong factional ties to sections of the military contradicts the Chairman, the pressure for some units to disobey control procedures would be enormous. For example, what would happen if, during a post-Deng, post-Yang succession struggle, Jiang Zemin issued orders to troops of the Guard Unit (formerly the 8341 Unit) to provide him with support against Yang Baibing? Yang could then issue his own orders, as a senior member of the CMC, to units of the Beijing Garrison Command under the Beijing MR, and to the political control system of the PLA. The leadership of these organizations currently contains individuals considered personally loyal to Yang. What would the military units do?

4. Elite Attitudes Toward PLA Political Involvement. This component comprises the perceptions and beliefs of current party and military leaders toward PLA involvement in elite political

struggles. Of greatest importance are the political and psychological legacy of military intervention during both the GPCR and Tiananmen, and the impact of long term changes in the socialization of military elites, particularly the evolution of PLA leadership attitudes during the reform period.

The general literature on civil-military relations observes that when a major political crisis erupts at the top of a communist system, the dual party-army elite structure virtually ensures that the army will become involved. In crises involving political issues outside the normal range of military interests, groups within the military tend to ally with specific groups within the party apparatus, rather than confront the party as an institution. Usually, a dominant group within the civilian party leadership is able to command the allegiance of the military or a major part thereof.

This pattern of military involvement has been very evident in the Chinese case. During exceptional political crises, the PLA has never intervened on its own as an institution to "settle" political disputes and/or alter policy. Moreover, in most cases of military involvement, the ultimate intent of dominant groups within the military has been to support the restoration or maintenance of order against the disruptive influence of radical elements in the party and society. Such intervention has by no means been a smooth and easy process, however. It has inevitably produced serious divisions within the PLA leadership, and the prolonged involvement of individual military leaders in factional struggle within the upper echelons of the party. We saw this in the GPCR and currently view it in the post-Tiananmen military.

The overall pattern of PLA involvement during the early stages of its intervention in the GPCR was by no means uniform, as various military units became deeply embroiled in factional disputes among Red Guard groups and between local party authorities, Red Guard and worker groups, and the contending leadership factions in Beijing. Given such confusion, compounded by contradictory orders issued by Mao, the military at times showed signs of hesitancy and passivity and even outright disobedience (the Wuhan Incident). There was little if any evidence of independent, coordinated behavior by the PLA. Those actual instances of planned, deliberate action occurred largely as a result of collusion between local party and military

leaders determined to resist the onslaught of various stripes of Leftists.

Ultimately, of course, most PLA leaders throughout the country opted for the forcible suppression of radicalism, and the military subsequently proceeded to occupy a dominant position within the organs of rule. In no sense, however, can such action be taken as either a military coup or as a unified response to the coordinated aims of the PLA leadership. Mao's above-mentioned "directive" provided a justification for the bulk of the PLA to act, in a largely ad hoc fashion, in accordance with its most basic common denominator, the preservation of order. Although PLA main force units were usually placed in charge of directing local PLA units to carry out Beijing's orders to form revolutionary committees supportive of the aims of the GPCR, in most cases, the two levels of PLA units collaborated to establish revolutionary committees that excluded leftists as local leaders. Such actions without doubt exceeded the intentions of Mao and his associates. Yet at no time during that process did the PLA as an institution openly defy the authority of Mao or the party. By the same token, neither did it act in a unified and coordinated manner to defend or further its institutional "interests."

Moreover, the rather prolonged involvement of the military in the party leadership structure during the late sixties and early seventies was due largely to the opposition of the vast majority of professional officers to GPCR social radicalism and the machinations of Jiang Qing. This did not suggest a military "plot" to maintain a conservative military regime, however. Indeed, groups of PLA leaders were arrayed against one another, with the main lines of division placing Lin Piao, his Fourth Field Army colleagues, and a scattered coterie of supporters within local PLA organs against a dominant, albeit disorganized, group of moderate professional commanders with links to Zhou Enlai.

As Ellis Joffe has pointed out, once Lin and the Gang of Four were removed from power (with the support of senior PLA leaders), the rationale behind the continued military dominance of party and state organs was largely eliminated, and it became considerably easier to reestablish civilian control. Indeed, although difficult to confirm, it is very likely that most military leaders concluded from the experience of the GPCR that military involvement

in such divisive social and political conflict presented few if any benefits for the military.

In addition to the crucial role of Mao (above), we can see from the above that three basic factors greatly influenced the pattern of PLA involvement during the GPCR, explain, to a very great extent why the PLA played such a major role in the political system at that time, and why, ultimately, it acted in a reasonably coherent manner to maintain order and avoid major, open splits. First, the party apparatus as a national institution with authoritative control over the policy process was essentially paralyzed in the face of a violent mass movement initiated by Mao. This left the PLA as the only viable institution capable of maintaining a semblance of order. Second, and more importantly, local party and state leaders enjoyed close personal relations and strong mutual interests with local PLA leaders in protecting the status quo and avoiding total chaos. Third, the alternative of extreme radicalism associated with "illegitimate" leaders such as Jiang Qing was absolutely unacceptable to the vast majority of the military. Because of these factors, moderate, conservative beliefs and attitudes within the PLA opposed to radical social mobilization were able to overcome most internal PLA divisions and provide a basis for the semblance of coherent, albeit diffuse PLA involvement in elite politics in support of moderate, pro-stability senior party colleagues.

Tiananmen involved a much more limited pattern of military involvement in politics in a very different political environment, yet its impact on military perceptions and internal divisions has also been enormous. The use of the PLA to forcibly resolve a confrontation between conservative leaders and large segments of urban society reintroduced the military into Chinese politics in a major way.² Tiananmen greatly destabilized the military's relations with society and the party, its internal unity, its policy direction, its operational mission, and its overall modernization program. In some of these areas, it has exacerbated longstanding tensions and problems. In other areas, it has created new ones.

Tiananmen identified the PLA with an unpopular act of bloody repression that has severely undermined its social prestige as an institution and most likely raised strong concerns among many officers over the correctness of current military policy in many areas. The incident presented major

implications for the internal unity and morale of the military and its obedience to party control in a future political crisis. Despite its ultimate display of loyalty to Deng Xiaoping and to the regime, segments of the PLA nevertheless exhibited considerable hesitation and even some outright resistance to party directives during spring 1989. This may have been partly due to confusion concerning the proper lines of operational control over military forces during the crisis. There is no doubt, however, that officers and soldiers alike participated in the pro-democracy demonstrations of the spring, and that some refused to obey orders to use force against Beijing citizens leading to investigations concerning the behavior of thousands of soldiers. Of even greater significance, high-level officers and senior, retired PLA generals questioned the judgment of the top leadership in declaring martial law and expressed their strong concern over the use of the army against civilians prior to June 3.

The long term, adverse impact of Tiananmen upon the military is indicated by the fact that, since June 1989, the central leadership has attempted to implement a range of policy measures designed to improve relations between the military and society and assure that the PLA remains responsive to party directives. First, there has been a major, ongoing attempt to raise the importance of politics and ideology and strengthen the structure of party control within the PLA, reviving practices often employed before the reform period. Secondly, the CMC carried out an extensive reshuffling of the PLA leadership in spring and summer 1990, both at the center and the regions, involving transfers, promotions, and retirements. Thirdly, the party leadership apparently attempted to soothe feelings in the military by significantly upping the defense budget, despite a continued policy of economic austerity. Finally, to hopefully prevent a recurrence of massive social protest, the party leadership has also placed renewed emphasis on military involvement in internal police functions. Efforts have been made to overhaul the PAP and transform it into a significantly larger, better-trained and disciplined, well-equipped force, largely through closer integration with the PLA.

However, rather than solving the PLA's post-Tiananmen problems, many of these measures have instead produced further difficulties for the leadership, both internally and in its relations with

lary. Most important, the repoliticization campaign and the involvement of the military in internal security duties have apparently generated significant controversy within the PLA by challenging the clear emphasis on professionalism and modernization that had emerged prior to Tiananmen as part of Deng Xiaoping's effort at military reform. Developments since Tiananmen have thrown the validity of this trend and its implications for creating a more professionalized military into doubt. Indeed, the media blitz that sustains the repoliticization effort at times suggests that many aspects of past military reform were somehow linked to a subversive process of "peaceful evolution" orchestrated by hostile international forces and their domestic supporters. This strategy is purportedly intended to split the PLA and undermine socialism through psychological warfare centered on the Western "bourgeois" notion of a neutral military free from partisan political control. In the view of some conservatives, such reform-based attitudes may have even contributed to the emergence of the Tiananmen crisis by fostering sympathy for the *pro-democracy* demonstrators and hesitation within the military to deal harshly with them. From their perspective, the repoliticization effort thus represents a corrective to the corrosive effect of military reforms on the obedience of the PLA to party leadership.

Various scattered pieces of evidence from both the official PRC media and Hong Kong publications suggests that a large number of officers indeed question the logic of the repoliticization campaign, while also resenting the attempt to again embroil the military in domestic security functions. Such resentment has been compounded by the fact that Western sanctions against the Chinese regime imposed immediately following Tiananmen have reduced China's access to advanced military technology, equipment, and training and exchange programs, particularly with the United States. This has compelled the Chinese military to reluctantly explore alternatives to reliance on Western defense hardware.

Opposition to Tiananmen and its aftereffects appears to be especially strong among younger officers at the middle and upper-middle levels of the PLA leadership. Promoted to important positions under the reforms and actively involved in the

movement to professionalize and modernize the military, they have strong career and policy-related reasons to maintain pre-Tiananmen trends. It is also very likely that some officers within specific service arms, in particular the navy and the air force, are unsympathetic toward current policy. These services benefitted substantially from the military-related contacts and exchanges with the West. They presumably have a stronger understanding of the need to sustain modernization and may be very skeptical of any attempts at repoliticization.

Although it is virtually impossible to estimate the extent of their dissatisfaction or their ability to express it, these military groups and their possible supporters among party reformers most likely comprise a significant force opposing post-Tiananmen changes in military policy. The resulting tension between "reformers" and "politicizers" has thus revived the long-term dispute between professionalization and politicization that has plagued the PLA since the late 1950s.

As in the past, this policy struggle has become inextricably bound up in factional strife among the top leaders made all the more intense due to the general decisiveness of the Tiananmen crackdown and its effect in enhancing personal over institutional lines of authority. As mentioned above, many of the above post-June 1989 measures have been used by specific leaders as instruments in an escalating struggle to control the PLA and consolidate personal positions of power in preparation for the succession struggle. Moreover, among the reformist professional military leaders, there are likely divisions between those committed to maintaining order as a first priority, above and beyond support for continued reform, and those recognizing the need for fundamental economic and even political change as a prerequisite to the establishment of any period of enduring stability and development in China.

5. Regional Military Power. This component includes the political and personal relationships existing among the leadership of the military regions and the People's Armed Police (PAP), and between these leaders and (a) top party and military figures in Beijing; (b) provincial and municipal party and state leaders; and (c) subordinate leaders within their own regional command structures. Of particular

importance are the role of Field Army ties among PLA leaders, the impact of reshufflings of regional military commands, the leadership configuration and loyalties of the Beijing PAP, the relationship between local military and party elites, and the internal structure and beliefs of individual Group Armies, including their overall level of regional affiliation as established through patterns of recruitment and promotion.

This component of military involvement in elite struggle has witnessed the most significant changes since the GPCR. Virtually every indicator of regional military power suggests that "mountain topism" no longer presents the threat to central control that it arguably did during the early decades of communist rule.

First, there has been a wholesale transformation in the relationship between military and party leaders at the provincial and major municipal levels. The closely cooperative, interlocking party-army leadership structures so evident during and immediately after the GPCR have been replaced by two very separate sets of leaderships, existing within an increasingly antagonistic relationship. Local government and party officials are younger, better educated and more pragmatic than in the past, boasting backgrounds in administrative, industrial, and technical fields and are often born and raised in the area where they serve. Leaders in charge of military regions and districts, although better educated than in the past, have been brought up through a more professionalized military system less involved with the local civilian leadership. Moreover, those leaders above the deputy chief of staff level are usually not from the localities in which they serve.

Perhaps most important, the interests of these local military and non-military leaders are far from congruent. Serious tensions between military units and local governments exist, largely as a result of the military reforms begun in the mid-eighties. These center on various types of ongoing jurisdictional disputes over land, natural resources, and industrial enterprises and the heavy burden placed on localities resulting from the demobilization of one million soldiers during the late eighties. This increase in tensions has been made worse still by additional frictions arising from an increase in both recruitment and resettlement problems among military personnel since

Tiananmen, which have forced provincial governments to increase allowances and pensions to servicemen and their families.

In addition, there is a strong contrast in the level of formal political influence exerted by local military and party leaders in China today. High level military leaders at the local level occupy far fewer party leadership posts in Beijing than in the late sixties and seventies, while local party and state leaders have generally increased their presence in these organs. Local military leaders probably have little political leverage to use against local civilian leaders.

Second, local military leaders have been shifted at fairly regular intervals since the early seventies, particularly in 1973, 1980, 1985, 1987 and 1990. This suggests a strengthening of Beijing's general control over regional military structures, and the erosion, in particular, of possible PLA political influence exerted through the Field Army (FA) system. Indeed, the overall influence of FA ties as a basis for regional military association has been drastically reduced through the death and retirement of powerful military leaders from the revolutionary era. Such ties are simply no longer the dominant focus of loyalty and leadership association within the PLA, and one cannot identify any apparent balanced pattern of representation within the center and the regions among PLA leaders from various FA backgrounds. Thus it is highly unlikely that those few remaining PLA leaders of the 2nd FA in Beijing and the provinces (notably within the Chengdu MR) will be capable of directing military forces to take action in their defense, if, for example, they were pressured by PLA leaders from other FA backgrounds to relinquish their posts after Deng's death. There is little evidence that the personal network exists within the PLA to provide them with armed support.

Having said this, we cannot simply dismiss regional military leaders as irrelevant to the issue of elite conflict. Indeed, despite the weakening of local military structures as actors in the political system, there are still indications that, at least at the MR level, they loom large in the calculations of the Beijing leadership. This is suggested by what little we know concerning the 1990 reshuffle. The majority of the changes apparently involved routine retirements and promotions of younger generals to more senior posts, rather than factionally or policy motivated shifts. Most of those removed were in

their late sixties while those promoted or remaining in power are in their fifties or early sixties. However, at least at the MR leadership level, there is considerable evidence to suggest that individuals were moved as part of a very deliberate bargaining process with Beijing, and that in many cases, a conscious effort was made to balance professional commanders against commissars within the same unit. The pattern of shifts also indicates that leaders associated with the Shenyang MR in particular have considerable influence in Beijing.

In addition, the changes were implemented only after considerable delay and in a very gradual manner over several months and were not publicly announced until many weeks after they had commenced. The personnel shifts at the MR level were inaugurated by Yang Baibing during personal visits to each region (with the apparent exception of the Nanjing MR), rather than, as in the past, from Beijing by the chairman of the CMC. All these actions suggest that the reshufflings were controversial, perhaps provoking prolonged disagreement and even resistance both in Beijing and in the provinces. The rather secretive and gradual process of implementation also may indicate Beijing's fear that the changes would be taken as a wholesale purge of commanders and hence evidence of severe PLA instability, or, conversely, as a general reflection of the relative weakness of the central leadership vis-à-vis the military.

Another important difference is that the military shifts were on a much larger scale than in the past. Almost all MR commanders and political commissars were either rotated or retired after serving an average of only three to five years. Within the MRs, over half of the personnel at the level of Deputy Commander and above were changed, with major turnovers occurring in the political commissar system in particular. Of those MR leaders not affected by the reshuffle, only a very small proportion have held their posts since as early as 1985. The majority were appointed in 1988, with a very few in 1986 and 1987. At the MD level, over half the commanders and political commissars were shifted. All commanders and commissars in the Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai Garrison commands were changed, while a relatively small number of leaders within the Group Armies were shifted or removed. The extent of change, as well as the timing

of the reshuffle (soon after Tiananmen and only a few years after the previous reshuffle), certainly suggest that Beijing was at the very least trying to play it safe and reshuffle the leadership of most local PLA structures so as to prevent the possible reemergence of personal power bases within the PLA.

Beyond these considerations, some of the PLA personnel changes were apparently made to reward or punish individuals for their performance during Tiananmen. The leadership of the Beijing MR was undoubtedly removed because of the hesitation it displayed during the Tiananmen crackdown. Moreover, there are indications that the removal of much of the leadership of the PLA Navy came as a result of its general support for Zhao Ziyang and the Tiananmen demonstrators. The intention behind the more extensive shifts in the MR political system remains unclear. They probably reflected the leaderships' dissatisfaction with the poor state of political education within the PLA. But they might also have been part of an attempt by Yang Baibing, the head of the GPD, to consolidate his position after Tiananmen (as mentioned above). It seems that the Yangs did not come out as clear "winners" in the process, however.

Implications

What, if any, conclusions can be drawn from the above observations concerning the extent and type of likely involvement by the military in a future succession struggle? There are at least five possible alternative types of such involvement:

1. No action by military forces.

2. Use of PLA units by the party leadership as a show of force, to maintain social order and provide a stable social environment during the establishment by the party of a viable successor regime.

3. Rapid, decisive use of selected military forces by one faction of party leaders to support a successful power seizure leading to a stable successor regime.

4. Coordinated use of military forces to suppress social and political unrest and establish a stable political leadership under military control.

5. Anarchic use of military forces to support different contending leadership factions.

The ability of the PLA to perform the role of stabilizer, either as an obedient tool of the party leadership (alternative two), or as an independent force (alternative four) rests upon assumptions regarding the internal organizational and doctrinal unity of the military which are not clearly confirmed by the historical record. As a result, analysts who favor one or the other of these alternatives are usually forced to argue that military reform in the late eighties has brought about a qualitative transformation of military attitudes and institutions. In particular, they cite either the unprecedented strengthening of institutional procedures for assuring party control over the military and resolving intra-elite conflict, or the emergence of a coherent professional corporate "ethos" among military commanders, dedicated to the maintenance of a unified nation-state. Some individuals even attempt to stress both characteristics, thereby presenting a somewhat contradictory argument.

Given the various features of the Chinese system and the history of PLA political involvement discussed above, it is very difficult to envision exactly how the military could act to ensure a completely smooth transition to the next generation of Chinese leaders, or to remain entirely uninvolved in a future succession struggle (alternative one). In a situation where the leadership of the CCP will likely consist of individuals lacking strong personal authority, and where moderates may be significantly divided over the type of post-elder regime to establish, the locus of party authority may be very difficult to determine. PLA officers at different levels in the system will probably be torn between a sense of informal loyalty to personal patrons/associates, the formal orders of a weak party leader, and their differing estimates of the relative importance of order versus development issues in the make-up of the new regime. In such a situation, it may also prove impossible for one faction of a weak successor leadership to credibly use the threat of a show of force to deter another faction (alternative two) as a means of establishing a stable successor leadership.

It therefore seems more likely that PLA units will in some way be involved in a future succession struggle. However, it is certainly not the case that

such participation will amount to civil war (alternative five). The likelihood of the use of different MR forces by various political factions in an all-out succession struggle is relatively low (although not inconceivable) due to the weakened and divided PLA leadership structure at the regional level, the general erosion of FA ties, and the evident historical desire of the professional military as a group to avoid broadly-based involvement in internal elite struggles and maintain national unity. It is more probably that a small portion of the military would be used against others in a future showdown among the successor leadership involving a rapid seizure of power in Beijing (alternative three).

One Possible Scenario

The death of Deng Xiaoping (should it occur before that of Yang Shangkun), will most likely not precipitate any major political crisis for the regime, because of: (a) the entrenched position of the Yangs and the general desire of most civilian and military leaders to avoid provoking political and possibly social chaos by challenging their position; and (b) the support which Jiang Zemin probably receives from well-respected, moderate PLA pleaders. The Yangs will likely seek to work with Jiang to maintain stability in a post-Deng setting, which could last for several years.

Yet such a regime would by no means signify a successful leadership transition. It would remain terribly weak and precarious, internally divided and committed by political necessity to the continued defense of Tiananmen, and hostile to the long-term interests of many professional commanders. Over time, strong pressures would likely grow, within the PLA and the CCP, for a softening of the verdict on Tiananmen and an accompanying marked diminution of the politicization campaign within the military. But assuming no internal or external social or diplomatic crises emerge to severely pressure the leadership, the true test will only come after Yang Shangkun departs the scene.

At that time, it may be possible that a sufficiently large enough group of party and military elders with similar views on reform policy could work together to select a stable successor leadership that is genuinely collective in nature. But this is highly unlikely, since such a development runs directly

counter to what we know about the nature of political authority in China. The more active among the remaining elders would probably press for their own separate candidates for supreme leader, thereby forging another unstable, compromise leadership. This leadership will probably become increasingly precarious as the last of the elders depart the stage.

In the absence of the elders, the more moderate members of this weak compromise leadership will probably become more dependent on support from the more reform-minded, professional officers at the upper and mid-levels of the PLA. It is quite possible that some of these party leaders will be tempted to depart from the official line on Tiananmen to strengthen their support among such military moderates. Conversely, other party leaders may attempt to ally with individuals such as Yang Baibing, perhaps out of a common association with the Tiananmen repression and the subsequent hardline policies, and thus seek to oppose any attempt to alter verdicts on Tiananmen.

Any subsequent public speeches by top leaders that depart from the accepted line on Tiananmen will of course send a signal to the discontented in China's cities, sections of which may then become willing to risk public demonstrations. This would likely produce a greater split within the elite. Without the elders, and with the increased need by some aspiring successors to maintain moderate support, one group may argue strongly against the use of force. The hardliners would almost certainly argue for strong measures to assure order, appealing to the basic fear of chaos among professional military commanders.

In such a situation, the stake of individual military leaders in the victory of one party group over another is obviously of crucial importance. There is little evidence that high-level factional divisions with the elite extend throughout the MR leadership, much less into GAs. However, supporters of Yang Baibing and individuals closely associated with Tiananmen occupy some very key posts, particularly in armed units within the Beijing area. Also, it is important to remember that most of Yang Baibing's career since the GPCR has been spent in the political system of the Beijing MR, and he may have established a strong support network in the capital. Finally, even beyond Beijing, the Yangs may have acted since Tiananmen to strengthen their support within the military through their control the political apparatus.

Throughout the regional military structure, the likely dominant desire of professional commanders to remove Yang Baibing and his supporters will confront the fear of resulting chaos, as well as, perhaps, the political check provided by commissars associated with Yang. The result would likely serve to ensure that most military forces outside Beijing do not become involved in the elite struggle. Thus, the most likely form of military involvement will probably consist of the use of military units in and around Beijing in a rapid seizure of power. Given the apparent strength of opposition to Yang Baibing among most PLA officers, this would most likely amount to a putsch against Yang by officers loyal to men such as Liu Huaqing and Qin Jiwei.

The above scenario assumes the survival of Yang Baibing as a major political figure through the early post-Deng period. If, however, he is removed from power while elders are still in control, perhaps as part of an effort by Deng to strengthen modernization efforts, the risk of military involvement in the succession will be reduced. However, unless Yang's removal is accompanied by a peaceful removal of others within the PLA and the party identified with Tiananmen and hardline policies, the chances of a confrontation in Beijing will remain.

Endnotes

¹Jiang had limited links to the PLA through his early work in the area of military-related telecommunications, within the MMBI structure and later (in the early eighties) in the Ministry of Electronics Industry. As a result, he established some contact with the Third Department of the General Staff Headquarters, responsible for technology in the CMC. See *Tang Tai* No. 22, April 28, 1990, 12-13, translated, in FBIS-CHI No. 87, May 4, 1990, 23-25.

²Here it is important to note that increased political involvement has not involved increases in PLA representation on leading party and state organs since Tiananmen. Such a development, so notable during the Cultural Revolution, has not occurred. Although it may be true that the informal political influence of senior military leaders as a whole has grown since Tiananmen as a result of the PLA's increased importance as protector of the regime, there is no clear indication that these leaders have decisively strengthened their position of power within the top elite as a "military faction." Divisions among military leaders and their relationship to different party factions seem far more important.

In addition to Qin, Liu, and Chi, several senior retired PLA generals might be acutely dissatisfied with the changes in military policy since Tiananmen, although their political role is likely constrained by physical infirmities. These include former Defense Minister Zhang Aiping and retired Chief of Staff Yang Dezhi, both of whom reportedly signed a letter calling on the PLA not to shoot civilians during the Tiananmen Incident. There are also Hong Kong reports that some veteran generals and PLA cadres have expressed their resentment directly to Deng Xiaoping of the Yangs' attempt to increase their influence over the military since Tiananmen.

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Informal Questionnaire Results

Second Annual Staunton Hill Conference on the PLA

1. Given that there have been more massive pro-reform demonstrations in a major metropolitan area, will the PLA sit on their hands?

Yes	12%	44%
No	15%	56%

2. Assuming the demonstrations have deteriorated to such an extent that the PLA is forced to intervene, will they support:

Hardliners	7%	26%
Reformers	7%	26%
Combination of Both	7%	26%
Unknown	6%	22%

3. If the leadership is split, will the PLA remain unified?

Yes	15%	56%
No	11%	41%
Unknown	1%	3%

4. Assuming the death of Deng Xiaoping, who will immediately emerge as leader?

Yang Shangkun	21%	84%
Unknown	2%	8%
Coalition Chen Yun/Ysk	1%	4%
Li Peng	1%	4%

5. Assuming again that the leader noted above is most probably only an interim leader, who in the long term, will become China's leader?

Unknown	13%	52%
Zou Jiahua	2%	8%
Zhao Ziyang	2%	8%
Wuer Kaixi	1%	4%
Liu Huaqing	1%	4%
Yang Shangkun	1%	4%
Someone from South	1%	4%

Li Ruihuan, Zhu Rongji

or Qiao Shi	1%	4%
None of Current Lineup	1%	4%
Jiang Zemin	1%	4%
Zhu Rongji	1%	4%

6. Apart from the CMC, do the other top institutions of the CCP, (Politburo Standing Committee, Central Committee, Secretariat, have any remaining relevance?

Yes	20%	71%
No	8%	29%

7. Henceforth, will it still be necessary for the leaders to justify decisions in Marxist-Leninist-MZD thought terms?

Yes	16%	59%
No	11%	41%

8. Can the Government, decoupled from Marxism-Leninism, remain in control of the State and provincial infrastructure?

Yes	18%	64%
No	9%	32%
Unknown	1%	4%

9. Will external entities, such as the exiled dissident community, be able to force change?

Yes	1%	4%
No	25%	92%
Unknown	1%	4%

10. Will there be major personnel changes at the 14th Party Congress?

Yes	12%	50%
No	11%	46%
Probably	1%	4%

11. Will existing mainlander versus native schisms in the KMT on Taiwan be so exacerbated by tensions related to the drift towards independence, that the Party will split?

Yes	13%	52%
No	12%	48%

12. Will political/social disorder come to China?
When Deng Dies?

Yes	17%	63%
No	9%	33%
Perhaps	1%	4%

In the next year whether or not Deng dies?

Yes	5%	18%
No	22%	79%
Unknown	1%	4%

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